

Forgiveness Fueled Hope

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[0 : 00] Are you seated? My pleasure this morning to welcome to our pulpit at Cheyenne Mountain this morning, the Reverend Brian Counts. Brian's been a friend of Cheyenne Mountain Church for many, many years, and we're looking forward to what God's going to say through him to us this morning.

So, Brian, welcome. Good morning. It is good to be back with you to see some faces. Of course, we're all masked, so it's kind of hard. I'm here often enough where I just about get some names and faces, and then you go and mess with me this time, cover up your faces, and make it really, really tough.

So this morning, please turn with me to Psalm 130. Psalm 130. And as you're turning there, speaking of masks and things like that, when Matthew asked me to come and be with y'all this morning, a week or two ago, I started to think, what am I going to preach on?

And then I thought, well, what did I preach on last time I was there? It was probably about two years ago that I was with you, and I looked, and I couldn't find anything from two years ago that I had preached here. And so I kept looking forward, and then I realized, oh, it was only in January of 2020.

[1 : 12] It just has felt to me like two years because of everything that's happened since I was here last towards the end of January. Just 10 months, but all of us feel like we've lived several years between then and now.

We're tired of being reminded how much things have changed. We're tired of living this new life. We're tired of not being able to make plans.

I saw recently someone had a wall calendar up just a month at a time, just a big month-long calendar. And instead of all of the dates and appointments and meetings, it just said, does it really even matter?

Why do we even have this calendar? There's so much even that we've all lost, right? Just in the last several months since March. Small things.

I was at Costco just a couple nights ago with my wife, and I miss the samples. I miss going to Costco and having the samples. That's just a small thing.

[2 : 16] We've all lost, of course, even greater things than that. We've lost the chance to participate in school milestones like graduations and proms. We've lost the chance to see family.

Some of us perhaps have lost income or jobs. Some of you might have known someone whose life has been lost to the virus or other illness. There's just a lot that we have packed in since March, and there's a lot more that we don't know still what is to come.

And while everything seems so different than it does just a few months back, people remain the same, don't they? Don't we? While everything is different, people, we watch them, we look at them. Are you like me? You like to watch people, probably. You like to think about why do they do what they do? Why are they the way that they are? What are they doing? And it's also interesting, of course, to watch ourselves.

And though this is new for all of us, we're all responding according to the same old people things, people ways that we've always been about and always seen. For instance, just like in other trials and things that have come our way before this pandemic, humankind is able to endure so much.

[3 : 32] And we see that still today, don't we? It is remarkable, Christian or not, sometimes just how much people can endure and put up with and go through.

And yet at the same time, while we're able to endure so much and accomplish sometimes so much, we are also incredibly fragile at the same time. And what I mean is, you and I can be taken out by one little word from one person.

If the right person says the right word to us, it undoes us. Just one word. Or we can be taken out, of course, by a submicroscopic virus also. So we can endure so much, but yet we're also so fragile. And I hope if you and I have seen anything these last few months is that in many cases, most ways, you and I are helpless. And that's a strong word, but I choose it on purpose because it's true.

You and I have been surrounded by a sense of helplessness these last few months. And what do we do when we come into contact with that reality that we're helpless?

[4 : 37] So often we just want to shut it down. Don't think about it. Don't admit it. Turn around, find something to do, find something to be in charge of, find something to control. Because I don't like to feel that I'm out of control.

I don't like to feel that I'm helpless. And I think of Psalm 130 during times like this because it shows us the kinds of things we can do, that we can turn to, that we can say and meditate on when we are helpless.

And I think it helps us stay in contact with that reality of helpless when we know what to do with it, when we know where to go with it. Not that we can turn it off and become suddenly not helpless, but we can lean into it and realize the reality of it and even see what God is doing in our lives through it. So what I want to do this morning is read Psalm 130. And we're going to look at three main points this morning. I want you to listen for them as I read it. The first is that when we are helpless, we should cry out.

The second is that when we are helpless, we should remember. And the third is that when we are helpless, we should wait with hope. So cry out, remember, and wait with hope.

[5 : 46] Listen for these things as I read God's word for us this morning. This is Psalm 130. Out of the depths, I cry to you, O Lord. O Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy. If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?

But with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared. I wait for the Lord. My soul waits. And in his word I hope.

My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. O Israel, hope in the Lord. For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.

And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities. Let's pray. Father, these words were written thousands of years ago. And yet somehow in your wisdom, you were thinking of us this morning, even as they were written down all those years ago.

[6 : 53] By your spirit then and by your spirit now, we pray that you would reveal your heart to us. We pray that you would reveal your truth to us, that it would comfort us, that it would help us, and that it would change us.

Through Jesus we pray. Amen. So first, when you and I are helpless, we can cry out. And I want to point you to what he says there in verse 1.

Out of the depths I cry to you. What are the depths? Well, often in the Psalms, the depths refers to deep water. The depths are the depths of deep water.

And when he says, I'm in the depths, it's that sense. I hope you've never had this sense in real life, but you can imagine it if you haven't. It's that sense of treading water. Your feet can't touch the bottom.

And you're giving up. And the water begins to close up over your face. That's the metaphor the psalmist is using to describe his emotional state, to describe the reality that he sees around him.

[7 : 54] He's crying out of the depths. When you and I are in the depths, it's a place in life where we feel that we have no more control. Where we feel that we're out of resources.

Where we feel overwhelmed and we're beginning to sink down. It's the place where we can finally admit sometimes that we're beaten and defeated and helpless.

And I think, like I've said, for many of us, perhaps you've come face to face with that over the last few months. Maybe it's been through some other circumstance in your life before the last seven or eight months.

But has there been a time where you have felt like you're in the depths and that water is about to close up over your face? Where you're giving up. Where you're out of control.

We've been presented with that over and over again. Because no matter what you think about the danger of the virus. And I can imagine there's multiple opinions in the room about how dangerous it

is. Regardless of that, haven't we all been confronted over and over again with a sense of our own mortality over the last few months?

[8 : 58] Haven't we all been confronted with the fragility of our wealth and our income? Haven't we all been reminded that we are not in control? Sometimes we think we lost control back in March.

Folks, we were never in control. We only have lost the illusion of being in control. We never actually were. And however this whole pandemic started or however it's been managed, it has changed our lives and we can't opt out.

We have to admit that in many ways, whether it's this or some other thing in your life, there's a sense of helplessness. And when you and I are helpless, it can take us to different places. Where it should take us is to cry out to God like the psalmist does.

But instead, it takes us to sometimes places of anger. When you come into touch with your helplessness, we get mad. And we get mad at all kinds of things. We get mad at other people. We get mad at government officials. We get mad at family members. We get mad at bosses. We get mad at school administrators, whoever it might be. But so often, we're not really mad at the people our anger is directed first towards.

[10 : 05] We're angry at the fact that we're not in control. We're angry at the fact that this has been revealed to us and it's very, very uncomfortable. Sometimes it takes us to anger and sometimes it takes us to fear.

Because suddenly, there's all these things that I really want to be in charge of and I want to be able to control my health or my schedule or my plans. But I can't. And I've been talking with folks.

I've been watching myself. And I've sensed in myself and others I've talked to more fear than any other time in my life. More sleeplessness, more anxiety, more dread.

Sometimes it takes us to a place where we try to ignore it. Or sometimes it takes us to a place where we try to self-medicate, either through streaming TV or more food or more alcohol or whatever it might be.

Sometimes it just takes us to that sense of, I'm going to buckle down and work harder to gain control back of my life. And why do we go to these places like anger and fear and just the sense to numb it all?

[11 : 04] Why do we go to that? I think it's because you and I desperately want to be the heroes of our own story. And when we're helpless, that goal is not in reach. Heroes of stories typically aren't helpless before the enemy.

But they're in control. And you and I want to be that hero of our story. We want to be the ones who throw ourselves a life preserver. But can a drowning man throw himself a life preserver?

Of course not. The psalmist is saying, I'm in the depths. I cannot throw myself a life preserver. I need something outside of myself to come and pull me out of this deep water.

And that's why he cries out. Out of the depths, I cry to you, O Lord. O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy.

Do you hear the desperation in his voice when he says, let your ears hear my voice, my pleas for mercy? I'm begging you, God, don't let me go down.

[12 : 07] Don't let me be defeated by this helpless situation that I find myself in. Note what he's not saying. He's not bargaining with God. All right, God, I'm in a fix this time.

And if you get me out, I'm going to return the favor by behaving myself, by doing X, Y, or Z. He's not in a position to bargain.

Drowning men don't say, hey, throw me a life preserver and I'll make a deal with you. They're just begging for a life preserver. He's not saying, God, I've got 90% of this covered.

There's just this one little slice that I need your help with. No, he is fully and completely defeated. And that is exactly where you and I need to be.

And that's why times like these last several months can actually be good for us. Because we live typically in a place and lives full of resources and apparent control over things.

[13 : 02] And it can be very spiritually and emotionally actually healthy for us to get into touch and come into reality with our sense of helplessness. As long as we don't go to anger, fear, self-medication, but we go to crying out to God.

So I don't know if there's a particular thing in your life that's coming to mind as I talk about these things. Whether it's the pandemic or whether it's some other situation in your family or your work or something where you have had that sense of being in the depths.

But whatever it is, I encourage you to cry out. That's a hard place to be. It's a scary place to be. We don't like to admit it, but all of us in this room have a partnership in that.

We've all been there. We all will be there again. And there's something we can do. We can cry out. We don't have to go to anger and fear and numbing and distraction.

Maybe you've done that before and you've forgotten to do it now. Maybe you've never done it and it feels hard to be able to cry out like that. But what better thing could there be for the helpless person who's going down than to cry out?

[14:11] So first, when we're helpless, do what this psalmist does and cry out. Second, when helpless, remember. Remember. And that's all over this psalm.

We first need to remember that God cares. And if you take this psalm and place it in the context of the Old Testament, you'll see that there's actually many themes from this psalm that show up in other places in the Old Testament.

If you'll keep your finger there at Psalm 130 and flip over to Exodus chapter 2 or go there on your screen, whichever way you're looking at the scripture this morning.

Go back to Exodus chapter 2 and look with me at verse 23. In Exodus 2, the descendants of Abraham, the children of Israel, are in slavery in Egypt.

And they have been 400 years. I'm sure that by this point, their collective memory can barely even understand a time when they were not enslaved in a very difficult kind, an awful kind of slavery to Pharaoh.

[15:14] In verse 23, we read that during those many days, the king of Egypt died. And the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help.

Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel and God knew.

Did you hear some of the same themes in Exodus 2 as Psalm 130? First of all, they're in the depths. That word isn't used, but they're in slavery. They're not in control.

As slaves, they're helpless. You did hear probably cry out. Out of the depths, I cry to you, Psalm 130 says. Exodus 2 says they cried out for help.

Not only did they groan, but they cried out for help. And then just as Psalm 130 says we cry out, here in Exodus 2, we see that when we do, God does something.

[16:15] God remembers. He remembers his promises when he hears us cry out. He remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which is just as meaningful for believers today as it was for the children of Israel back then.

It says that God not only remembered, but he heard their groaning. God hears us. God sees us. God knows.

And God knows. And not just knows like he sees. We learn in the book of Hebrews that he knows because in his son Jesus, he has experienced suffering. He has experienced helplessness.

Jesus has cried out. He knows. He's sympathetic. We have a high priest that understands us and can sympathize with us. So we remember when we cry out that God cares.

That it's not just us on our own to go figure this out. But we have a God who is moved in his spirit. Who sees us and hears us and remembers us.

[17:19] So when we're helpless, we need to remember that God cares. We also need to remember what God has done. And here I want us to go back to Psalm 130 and take a look at verses 3 and 4.

Because here the psalmist is in the depths. It's a helpless situation. And what he does in verses 3 and 4 is he remembers another time he was in a helpless situation.

And he doesn't just remember any old regular helpless situation. He remembers a time when he was in the most helpless situation that there could be.

And he remembers the time when he tried to stand before God on his own record, his own merit, his own righteousness on the basis of what he had done.

And tried to stand. And he couldn't do it. He says in verse 3, If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? If God was to mark our sins, there's no way we could stand before him.

[18:20] What does that word stand refer to? It's that sense that you can be in someone's presence, lift your head up, look them in the face, and not be ashamed. Instead of standing, he's saying if God was to mark his sin, he would have to cower.

He would have to huddle, look down, hunch his shoulders. He couldn't stand before God with his shoulders back and face to face with the Lord.

It's an entirely helpless situation. He's saying that there is a perfect and holy and righteous God to whom you and I are accountable. And on our own, we cannot stand.

It's a helpless situation. There could be no more helpless situation. But think about Romans 5.2. And while we're turning around, just again, keep your finger there at Psalm 130 and turn over with me to Romans 5.

Take a look at verse 2 because, interestingly, the word stand shows up again. And I'm going to start in verse 1.

[19 : 25] You see, if God was to mark our iniquities, we couldn't stand.

But through Jesus, the first two words of Romans 5.2 says, you and I can stand because he paid the price for our iniquities so that God would no longer mark them, so that he would no longer remember them.

Think of it this way. There was a time when Jesus hung on the cross and cried out of the depths for help, and God did not answer. And because God did not answer Jesus, you and I will always be answered.

Because in that moment, Jesus paid the price. He paid the price for our iniquities so that God will always hear our cry for help.

It's amazing news. Now we can stand. Even though on our own, we are sinful, unclean, in Jesus, through his forgiveness, you don't just come into God's presence and have to stand in the back and hunch down.

[20 : 54] You come shoulders back, face up, and you see your father smile, Numbers 6 says. At you, because of you, sins gone and cleansed.

Stand before God. We need to remember what God has done. When you and I are helpless, whatever that situation is in your mind, we need to bring to bear the truth that God has helped us in the most helpless situation possible.

And if he's done that, then he will help us again in this. Maybe not on our timetable. Maybe not in our way. But if he has taken care of marking our iniquities and no longer does that, he will not abandon us.

That's why Psalm 130 verse 4 says that, With God there is forgiveness. Whatever that thing is that you're guilty of, in Jesus, through him, through faith in his perfect life, death and resurrection, with God there is forgiveness.

I want to point out something else that we can remember that God has done, and it comes from verse 7. It says that, With God there is plentiful redemption. Plentiful redemption.

[22 : 06] We've already said that in God there is forgiveness for our sins. But folks, salvation and what God is doing in grace is even better than that. Because plentiful redemption refers to the fact that one day all the effects of the fall will be gone.

Not just your sin and not just the problem of the disruption of your fellowship with God, but one day all of the other things we suffer with in this life that are ultimately because of sin will be healed and restored also.

There will be no more sickness, no more pandemics, no more viruses, no more social distancing, no more masks.

There will be no more death or crying or pain anymore, for the former things will have passed away. There will be plentiful redemption.

We're not going to run out of God's redemption when it comes to some effect of the fall. It's not like his redemption will only go so far, but just like the old hymn that we sing at Christmas, Joy to the World says, He comes to make his blessings known as far as the curse is found.

[23 : 20] Plentiful redemption. And that was done at the cross. We're waiting for it in real time and space, but it's going to be done. And we have to remember that when we're helpless, that God's not going to leave us there forever.

One day, everything will be fixed. God forgives our sins, and he brings plentiful redemption. So we can remember that God cares.

We can remember what he's done. We can also remember what God is like. When we are helpless. Look with me again at verse 7, in just the first part of it. That with the Lord, there is steadfast love.

Steadfast love. That is what God is like. He is a God of steadfast love. Now, if you've read your Bible very often, especially the Old Testament, and depending on the translation, you've come across these two words.

Steadfast love. They show up over and over, especially in the Psalms. Other translations talk about God's loving kindness. And it's a way in English to try to render a Hebrew word that we don't have something in English that exactly suits it.

[24 : 34] Because yes, it means love, like our word love. But this original Hebrew word also means not just love, but loyalty and mercy and kindness.

So take the four English words, love and loyalty and mercy and kindness, throw them in a pot, stir them together, and out comes what we translate here as steadfast love.

We remember that God is a God of steadfast love. Instead of trying to explain it, let me actually tell you a story from 2 Samuel chapter 9 that tells us in action what steadfast love looks like.

In 2 Samuel chapter 9, King David is on the throne. He's not been on the throne very long. The civil war between him and the previous king, King Saul, is over.

And David is the king of all 12 tribes. And there is a man in that chapter named Mephibosheth, which is a tough name to say. I had to practice it a few times before I came here this morning.

[25 : 39] And in 2 Samuel 9, his life, Mephibosheth's life, was not good, to say the least, even though he had been the grandson of a king.

And I say had been because his grandfather was King Saul, the king that came before the current king, King David. And as you can imagine, if you're the grandson of a former king, and the king who has replaced him is on the throne, you do not expect to be the most popular man in the country.

If anything, you go and hide because you're afraid. Kings want to wipe out all of the descendants of the previous king. So not only is he living in hiding though, but he had lost his family lands, which means he has no income, which means he is poor.

So he's living in hiding. He's an enemy of the state. He's poor. He has nothing. And on top of that, because of an injury when he was little, he's actually unable to walk. He's lame.

His life is not good. He's living in a place that literally is translated no pasture, or what we might say is nowheresville. He's hiding out far, far away.

[26 : 52] No money. He's unable to walk. No income. Living in a place called nowheresville. But David wants to keep a promise, the king. David wants to keep a promise that he had made to his best friend Jonathan.

Jonathan was the son of the former king Saul and the father of Mephibosheth. And David says, I want to keep a promise I had made to my friend Jonathan to be kind to the descendants of Jonathan and Saul.

As a matter of fact, David says in 2 Samuel 9, is there anyone left of Saul's family to whom I can show the kindness of God? And in 2 Samuel 9, when it says kindness of God, in the original Hebrew, it's the same word as Psalm 130, verse 7, steadfast love.

David says, is there anyone left of Saul's family to whom I can show the steadfast love of God? Which is a simple question, but it should be mind-blowing.

Saul's family was his enemy. Saul had tried to kill David for years. He had sent David out into the wilderness and hiding. And now that he's on the throne, instead of saying, that's it for Saul's family, he says, is there anyone left of that crazy crew that I can show the steadfast love of God to?

[28 : 11] What? But he's keeping a promise. He's being loyal to his friend Jonathan. And so David finds out about Mephibosheth. He sends servants to get him. And imagine being in Mephibosheth's shoes.

That's even harder to say, shoes after Mephibosheth. And you get a knock on the door and you say, who is it? And they say, we're the servants of David. What do you think?

It's over. They found me. I'm a dead man. You open the door and they say, you're coming to Jerusalem. You think, okay, he wants to kill me in person. So they go to Jerusalem and David says to him, Mephibosheth, I'm going to give you back your family lands, which were extensive.

Well, a lot of good that does him. He can't work it. He can't walk. He says, I'm going to give you servants to work the land, which means you just get a steady income. And Mephibosheth, I want you to stay here in Jerusalem and not just be in my city and not just be my neighbor.

Listen to this. I want you to come and eat at my table every day. That is steadfast love in action in a horizontal way between David and Mephibosheth.

[29 : 27] That is David showing love to his friend Jonathan and therefore his son Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth could represent a threat to his throne, but he says, I love him. And so I'm going to give him back family lands.

I'm going to give him an income and make him rich. I'm going to let him eat at the king's table because I'm loyal to my promise. So I'm going to show mercy and I'm going to show kindness. So with the Lord, Psalm 130 verse 7 is steadfast love. And let me ask you, if David shows steadfast love like that, how good do you think God's steadfast love is going to be? Do you think it's going to be less extravagant than David's? Do you think it's going to be less amazing than David's? Absolutely not. God is going to take David's steadfast love and blow it out of the water in the way he treats us by showing us love and loyalty and mercy and kindness. And when you and I are helpless, we need to remember that. We need to remember that God is a God of steadfast love and will not leave us on our own. We need to remember all that God has done.

[30 : 38] We need to remember that he cares. We need to remember what God is like. And you and I have to make a conscious choice when we're helpless to remember those things. Because if you're like me, when you're helpless, all you can see is your problems.

All you can see is your lack of control. All you can feel is that sense of, oh no, my life's out of control. We have to make a conscious choice to remember these things.

So when we're helpless, the first point was cry out. The second was remember. And now third and last, we need to wait with hope. And here I want us to look at verses 5 and 6 of Psalm 130 where the psalmist says, I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.

My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning and more than watchmen for the morning. Now you and I can read those two verses of poetry in less than 10 seconds. But it's going to take us a lifetime to get it.

It's going to take us a lifetime to learn how to live out what we just read, to wait on God. And there's lots of good ways to talk about what does it mean to wait on God. One, I think, is just trusting him over time.

[31 : 54] To wait on God is to trust him over time. And I don't mean here from Psalm 135 and 6 that when we wait on God, we just sit on our hands and do nothing if there's something for us to do.

If there's something you can do for the sake of your circumstances, then by all means, go and do it. The scripture is clear about that. But there's sometimes, yes, where there is nothing we can do. And what do we do then?

Whether our circumstances get better or not, we wait on the Lord. And there's no indication that by the time we get to the end of this Psalm in verse 8 that the psalmist's circumstances have changed. There is every indication that his perspective has in the way he goes through those unchanging, difficult, depth-like circumstances. So when your circumstances don't change, how do you wait with hope?

And the answer is you have to take God's forgiveness seriously. In other words, to understand how to wait with hope when you're helpless, this third point, you've got to get the second point, that God's forgiveness is real, that with the Lord there is forgiveness.

[33 : 02] And that's why verse 4 ends in a way that sounds strange to our ears. But with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared. When you read that, don't you expect it to say, with you there is forgiveness, therefore I don't fear you.

Therefore I'm not afraid of you. But he says, with you is forgiveness, therefore I fear you. And there's lots of different kinds of fear of God in the Bible you might know.

Some of it is, I tremble and I'm scared of him because I know I'm a sinner and he's a perfect and holy God. Other times it means respect. I think the best way to sum up all the fear of God in the Bible is to take God seriously.

When you take him seriously, you fear him. And for the sinner before God's judgment, that might be fear. But for the Christian, you and I, who are no longer afraid of God's judgment because it's all been poured out on Jesus, what does fearing God look like?

It still means taking him seriously. And that can mean taking his forgiveness seriously. Too often I think you and I picture the Christian who is fearing God as one who has a healthy dose of guilt and shame that they live with constantly.

[34 : 17] But that's not the gospel. I think you can actually not fear God, listen to this closely, by not taking his grace and forgiveness and acceptance of you seriously.

When Jesus has done everything to bring you into the presence of the Father so that you stand and see his smile and you don't take that seriously but you hang back and you say, yeah, but if you knew God how bad I was, you wouldn't smile at me.

Are you taking God's grace seriously? Are you taking Jesus' work at the cross seriously? No, with God there is forgiveness that he may be feared.

We stand in his presence taking his grace seriously and when we do that we can wait with hope when our circumstances don't change.

It's the logic of Romans 8 verse 32. He who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

[35 : 21] Hear the logic? If God gave us his son quit worrying about it. If he gave you his son do you think he's going to hold something back?

Not at all. And the psalmist in Psalm 130 is saying with God there is forgiveness therefore wait because if with him is forgiveness then he's going to give you all things.

you can wait with hope. And when we do we'll do two things which sound different but really aren't that different. We'll watch and we'll sleep.

And this psalm talks about that. It says that we wait for God more than watchman waits for the morning. Imagine sitting on a city wall thousands of years ago you've got the night watch you're struggling to stay awake you're struggling to let your eyes pierce the darkness and more than anything you want that sun to come up.

You don't want to be the one who has to raise the cry of a surprise attack. And so more than a watchman waits for the morning we watch for God. And I want to tell you something so beautiful about this psalm.

[36 : 30] The word mark in verse 3 that if he should mark iniquities and the word watch in watchman is actually the same root word in Hebrew.

The psalmist is making a play on words. He's saying if you oh Lord should mark iniquities and he doesn't because there's forgiveness God doesn't mark or watch our iniquities anymore.

There's forgiveness. So if God doesn't watch for my sin I'm going to watch for him when my circumstances don't change. This is cool play on words there in the Hebrew.

God no longer watches for our sins so we're going to watch for him. And to watch for him when your circumstances don't change means you watch for him to maybe bring deliverance.

Maybe bring a change to your circumstances. Sometimes he does that. It means you watch for what he's doing in your own life as you wait when circumstances don't. And you also watch for Jesus to come back because that's going to fix it all.

[37 : 33] That's the plentiful redemption. All the effects of the fall gone. So when we wait with hope because we take God's forgiveness seriously we'll watch. And then I said we'll also sleep.

And what I mean is this story from Acts chapter 12 and you don't have to turn over there but I think Peter who's in Acts chapter 12 got this psalm. And I think he got it because he falls asleep in a place where you would never imagine someone could fall asleep.

And what I mean is in Acts chapter 12 the persecution against the new church was increasing. And King Herod not the King Herod from Jesus but a different King Herod decides to arrest James and Peter.

Actually first just James. He arrests James. James is one of the inner three of the twelve along with Peter and John. He puts him in prison and then he executes him.

And it's the first one of the twelve apostles to be executed. And when he does that he realizes he gets a boost in his approval ratings. And like a good politician he says huh if this makes my approval ratings go up I'm going to do it again.

[38 : 47] And so now that James is dead he goes and arrests Peter and puts him in prison and gives him I can't remember how many guards but more than one I think it's at least four. There's no way Peter's getting out of jail.

He's going to be executed in the morning. It's near to the anniversary of Jesus' death just a few years before. That has to be on his mind. It's very close to the death of his friend of the last many years James.

That has to be very much on his mind. But God in his wisdom sends an angel to rescue Peter but he never rescued James.

Isn't that interesting? Those two stories in Acts 12 are back to back. James is in prison but not delivered. Peter goes to prison and an angel gets him out. Why are those two things back to back? And what did I say about Peter sleeping? Well when the angel comes to get him he's asleep. Chained to multiple guards. He's on death row.

[39 : 49] His execution's in the morning. And he's helpless. He's in the depths. And I don't know about you but when I'm in the depths or even nowhere close to him but just have a small problem what's the first thing to go?

Sleep. Peter is in the depths and snoozing. Thinking it's going to be just like James just a few days or weeks before that. But he's asleep.

And I think that's one result of when we get this psalm deep in our bones is that when we face the depths we'll still be able to sleep. There's many other psalms like that. About how the psalmist lay down and slept.

I woke again Psalm 3 says for the Lord sustained me. When we wait with hope we can watch and we can sleep. So I don't know what the depths are for you from your past from your present or maybe something for the future.

But my hope is that when you hit those really difficult times you'll remember what this psalmist does and you'll cry out and you'll remember and you'll wait with hope.

[40 : 55] Let's pray. Father we thank you that Jesus was the one who for our sake and for our deliverance cried out to you and was not answered.

That you turned your back on him so that he might pay the price that we all deserve. So that we could be the ones who know that when we cry out that you will always hear us.

That you will never leave us. Even when you leave us waiting on you and our circumstances not changing. We know that you have us in mind. We know that you have a plan.

And we know that you're at work. I pray Father that you would increase our faith because of the cross even when things seem bleak and helpless. And I pray that we would be able to be those who can watch for what you're doing and can sleep as well.

And we pray all these things in Jesus name. Amen.