

Sermon for December 14, 2025 - Advent 3

Psalm 130 (EHV)

Theme: My soul waits for the LORD

- 1) He came to redeem me
- 2) He comes to deliver me

A song of the ascents. ¹Out of the depths I have called to you, O Lord. ²Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to the sound of my cry for mercy. ³If you, Lord, kept a record of guilt, O Lord, who could stand? ⁴But with you there is pardon, so you are feared. ⁵I wait for the Lord. My soul waits, and in his word I have put my hope. ⁶My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. ⁷Israel, wait confidently for the Lord, because with the Lord there is mercy. With him there is abundant redemption. ⁸So he himself will redeem Israel from all its guilt.

What makes you happy when you feel depressed? Is it getting that gift you always wanted, like new clothes or a new phone? Do you find it in the praise of others for giving your best gifts? Do you seek happiness in having a lot of family and friends?

None of these things can make you truly happy.

Think about it: Canadians are richer than ever before, and yet they are also sadder. We can connect with people faster and easier than at any other time in history, and yet rates of loneliness and depression are at an all-time high.

Where can we find true happiness? With Psalm 130 as our guide, let us learn to find it in the LORD under the theme: **My soul waits for the LORD.** 1) He came to redeem me. 2) He comes to deliver me.

Part One: He came to redeem me.

Out of the depths I have called to you, O Lord.

Imagine being trapped in a deep, dark well. The walls are tight, and the air is stale. The more you try to get out, the deeper you sink. That is how the Psalmist felt in his distress. Still worse, he knew his own sinfulness got him there.

From what depths do you cry? Do you struggle with alcohol abuse, greed, or lust? Do you easily lash out at others in anger, gossip, hold a grudge, or act out of selfish pride? Your sins got you stuck, didn't they? At first, you thought you could free yourself, but the more you try, the more you fail.

Whenever you find yourself in such circumstances, just stop. Stop saying to yourself that your sin is not that bad. Stop trying to hide your guilt. Stop thinking that you can get out of it on your own.

Instead, cry out to the LORD in repentance:

²Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to the sound of my cry for mercy.

Yes, it is good to cry out to the LORD for mercy. Why? Because *the sacrifices God wants are a broken spirit. A broken and crushed heart, O God, you will not despise.*ⁱ

And you can trust that he will respond in mercy as you cry out in repentant faith, as the LORD himself declares: *I am merciful... I will not be angry forever.*ⁱⁱ

That thought led the Psalmist to confess:

³If you, Lord, kept a record of guilt, O Lord, who could stand?

What would it look like if the LORD kept a record of all your sins? Imagine the mountain of pages that would stand against you every day: the lustful thought you had over a beautiful woman, the sinful anger you expressed to your spouse, the greed you have in your heart, the disrespectful comment you uttered about someone God placed in authority, neglecting God's Word.... If God kept a record of all your sins, how could you ever hope to be saved?

⁴But with you there is pardon, so you are feared.

Yes, praise God that He pardons you freely, but never think His pardon was free. It cost Him dearly.

The wages of sin is death, the Bible says.ⁱⁱⁱ Therefore, the only way He could pardon us is if someone died in our place.

But the Bible also says: *No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him – the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough.*^{iv}

Therefore, the only way God could redeem us is if He did it Himself. And that is precisely what He did, as the Bible declares: *For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*^v

Christmas is the celebration of God keeping His promise to send a Saviour. Being born of a virgin, He is true God and true man in one person. As such, He kept God's Law perfectly – earning for us the righteousness God demands. Then He took all our sins upon Himself and died in our place. Before He died, Jesus declared, "It is finished." All your sins had been paid for in full. And to prove it was finished, Jesus rose from the grave. Everyone who repents and believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.

Apply to yourself what Jesus did. "It is finished," Jesus declared from the cross. All those shameful sins that haunt you? He paid for them in full. Even your worst sins are gone from God's sight – never to return. Because of Jesus, you never have to worry about your future. You can rejoice that you are God's dearly loved child – adopted through Holy Baptism and belonging to Him. He will never allow anything

to separate you from His love.^{vi} He will keep His promise to work in everything for your everlasting good^{vii} - delivering you from every evil work to bring you safely into His kingdom.^{viii}

How can these truths not make you happy? How can you not stand in awe at the love He has for you in Jesus?

Part Two: He comes to deliver me.

God's forgiving love moved the Psalmist to exclaim:

⁵I wait for the Lord. My soul waits, and in his word I have put my hope.

What is the psalmist waiting for? The LORD's deliverance from the trouble He experiences in life. How does he wait? Neither by trying to get out of his mess on his own nor by doing nothing. In God's Word, he puts his hope.

What about you? Do you put your hope in God's Word? Do you take time to really study His promises through personal devotions? Do you come to church regularly to be reminded of His love for you in Word and Song? Do you take to heart that, in Holy Communion, you are receiving the very body and blood Jesus used to save you?

Oh, how sad it is when we let our worries and work keep us from meditating on God's Gospel promises! The LORD stands ready to meet with you in His Word and comfort you with His love. Heed His call to spend time with Him. Listen intently to everything He teaches you because He truly desires what's best for you. He truly desires your salvation.

For this reason, the Psalmist confesses:

⁶My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

Imagine being a watchman on Jerusalem's gate, realizing all the dangers outside: bandits, wild animals and even foreign armies. Wouldn't you long for the morning light to relieve you from your post?

God has made you a watchman over your soul on this evil earth. He wants you to be aware of the dangers lurking in the darkness of this world that tempt you to sin, attack your faith, and try to addict you to things that will keep you enslaved to guilt, shame, and despair.

Doesn't that make you long for the morning of Christ's return? It does for me. And oh, how glorious that day will be when Christ reveals all and destroys every cause of evil forever!

The thought of Christ's return moved the Psalmist to exclaim.

⁷Israel, wait confidently for the Lord, because with the Lord there is mercy. With him there is abundant redemption. ⁸So he himself will redeem Israel from all its guilt.

Yes, brothers and sisters in Christ, confidently wait for the LORD. When tempted with thoughts like, “I’m worthless. I don’t know why God bothers with me. I shouldn’t expect anything good because of my sinful past.” Remember the LORD! Confidently say to yourself, “Get behind me, Satan! None of these thoughts are true! The LORD is merciful. With Him there is abundant redemption!”

To redeem means to buy back. The LORD loved you so much that He bought you back for Himself. What price did He pay? The life of His Son! Think about it: if that is what God paid for you, how can you be worthless to Him.

“But I am so sinful.” True, but He is so great! God chose to love you of His own accord. He redeemed you from all your guilt. He adopted you as His own through Holy Baptism. He continues to encourage you with His Word and Sacrament. And He will deliver you to Himself in heaven when He comes on the last day.

Therefore, wait confidently for the Lord. Study His Word. Partake of His Sacraments. Live to His glory by avoiding the sin that so easily entangles.

And if you fall into sin? Immediately go to Him in repentance without delay. I don’t care if it’s just a millisecond after you sin, go to Christ, repenting and trusting in His forgiveness. Why? To both prevent the devil from ensnaring you into a pit of despair, and to keep you on the right path of what is good and God-pleasing.

Yes, let your soul wait confidently for the LORD. He came to redeem you. He is coming again to deliver you. Amen.

ⁱ Psalm 51:17 EHV

ⁱⁱ Jeremiah 3:12 EHV

ⁱⁱⁱ Romans 6:23 EHV

^{iv} Psalm 49:7-8 NIV84

^v John 3:16 EHV

^{vi} Cf. Romans 8:38-39

^{vii} Cf. Romans 8:28

^{viii} Cf 2 Timothy 4:18