

'Waiting for the Lord'

June 23, 2024

Tsuchiura Megumi Church Worship Service Sermon

by Pastor Hironobu Suzuki (Moriya Bible Church)

Psalm 130:1-8

<Greetings>

I thank the Lord for allowing me to attend this service at Tsuchiura Megumi Church and listen to His Word together with you today at the Joban Mission pulpit exchange.

My name is Hironobu Suzuki, pastor of Moriya Bible Church.

I graduated from Tokyo Christian University in 1998 and was assigned as a missionary of Toride Bible Church in April 1999. Toride Bible Church started pioneer evangelism in Moriya City, and Moriya Bible Church started Sunday service in January 2002.

<Prayer>

I Praise Your name, Heavenly Father.

At this time, we listen to Your Word. Let Your Holy Spirit speak to us.

We wait and pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.”

<Introduction>

In our walk, we walk through joy and sorrow. And even when we say suffering and sorrow, it may be temporary, or it may be somewhat relaxed, or we may try to solve the problem by ourselves and a way will open up for us.

However, there are times in our lives when we find ourselves in a difficult situation where we struggle, fear, and suffer, and even if we try to do something about it, there is nothing we can do.

Today, we listen to the Words of Psalm 130. The psalmist was in such a predicament.

The psalmist was in the midst of a personal and national crisis (i.e., the people of Israel), and he was in deep distress.

<This essay 1>

1 From the depths I call to you, O LORD.

2 Hear me, O Lord, hear my voice. Listen to the voice of my supplication. (v1, v2)”

The song is sung ”from the depths of the abyss.”

It would indicate the depth of suffering.

He must have been placed in such suffering for a long period of time.

He must have been in such a state of suffering for a long period of time, with not the slightest light or hope for tomorrow. No, they may have seen a glimmer of light, but that glimmer of hope faded away again soon after, and so on.

It is not that he did not pray to God. He prayed. He wished.

But I guess he was in such a state that he could not see the light of salvation, the light of restoration, and God was hiding from my sight.

In the ”abyss,” there is a similar Psalm, Psalm 69.

69:1 Save me, O God. The water has come up to my throat.

69:2 I am sunk in the deep mire, I have no foothold. I am in the depths of the floodwaters, and the torrents are rushing over me.

69:3 I am weary with shouting, my throat is thirsty, and my eyes have become weak. I long for my God.

69:4 Those who hate me are more numerous than my hair, and those who seek to destroy me, my enemies the deceivers are strong. Must I give back even that which I did not take?

69:5 You know my foolishness, O God. My many transgressions are not hidden from you.”

“No foothold,” a condition or circumstance from which one cannot save oneself.

The title of this Psalm is ”Song of the Ascent,” but the Babylonian captivity may have been the background.

In our own walk of faith, we may find ourselves in a similar situation or

circumstance.

We are placed in deep and long suffering.

We ask and pray to God, but we cannot see the light in our suffering and pain.

You may be in a situation where you are trying to find a solution, but the more you struggle, the more fearful, hopeless, and bad the outcome actually is.

It may be about yourselves. It may be your family. It may be about your place in the world. It may be about the church we love.

<Main article 2>.

In this context, the psalmist remembered his own sin.

He said, "3 O [Lord], if you will keep your eye on iniquity, who can stand before you, O Lord?"

The earlier Psalm 69 also says, "69:5 O God, You know my foolishness. My many transgressions are not hidden from you."

The Babylonian captivity was God's judgment against Israel, God's people, for their sin of turning their backs on Him and not letting Him be God.

The psalmist remembers that no one can stand before God's judgment. The psalmist remembers God's judgment upon himself and his people for their sins (unrighteousness). He fears his own foolishness and his own sin before God.

There is fear of God's righteous judgment of sin, fear of not being able to stand.

He truly fears God for their iniquity, for their sin.

And then he continues, "But," he sings, "in Him is forgiveness". He remembers that He is a merciful God.

"4 But because you forgive, you are feared by men."

He sang that they could not stand before God, but that God would not destroy them or abandon them, but would have mercy on them and forgive them.

He worships a merciful God.

And because of that forgiveness, the psalmist continues, "You are feared by men" (v3).

He has lamented his foolishness and his wickedness.

But he sings that he fears and honors God, who is merciful and forgives.

It is not that God is "just a kind one" because He forgives.

He honors and fears God.

God's mercy, forgiveness, did not make us lose the fear of God.

God's mercy, forgiveness, moves people toward a true fear of God.

It does not mean being afraid of God or being timid, but it does not mean having an attitude of "I don't mind if I sin because I will be forgiven." It is not that kind of attitude.

It is the kind of fear that honors God, fears evil, grieves sin, and stays away from evil.

The church, living in the New Testament era, each of us, too, will walk in the fear of God.

God is righteous. He is the one who rightly judges sin. We have failed to stand before God because of our sins. But God loved us and through the substitutionary death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross, forgave all our sins, restored our fellowship with Him, and made us His children.

Boldly and with the assurance of forgiveness, we can approach God, by saying "Father".

We are not to be scared of God.

But we will bow down before God, turn away from evil, confess honestly before God what is unworthy of His presence, and honor Him.

An English preacher named Lloyd Johns said something like, "A Christian is one who is amazed at being forgiven of his sins."

A Christian is one who is thankful, amazed, and honors God for His mercy, who has forgiven those who should have been judged and condemned to sin and eternal death before a righteous God because of the cross of His Son, Jesus Christ, and who has been saved from the eternal judgment of God.

We must not take sin lightly, take forgiveness for granted, or take forgiveness lightly.

We who deserve unforgiveness have been forgiven through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, His Son, on the cross, through the mercy of God.

Because of God's mercy, the Christian's walk is not one that loses fear and reverence for God, but one that knows the magnitude of God's forgiving mercy, is horrified by it, and therefore "fears and reveres God".

And the fear of God is not a walk that deprives the Christian of joy and freedom, but is a walk that keeps the Christian alive in true Christian joy and freedom.

<This essay 3>

Confident in the merciful Lord, the psalmist confessed with fear and reverence of God.

"5 I wait for [the Lord]. My soul waits. I wait for the word of the Lord.

6 My soul waits for the Lord more than the night watchman waits for the dawn."

In the midst of this deep suffering, the psalmist confessed, "I wait for the Lord."

Repeatedly he sings, "I wait", "I wait", "I wait".

And to wait for the Lord means that he will wait for the Word of the Lord.

In verse 7, he exhorts the Israelites to "wait for the Lord".

"For in the Lord is grace and abundant redemption. He will redeem Israel from all unrighteousness (v7)."

What does that mean?

It says, "There will be abundant redemption," but it also means that what we have suffered for so long now, will be resolved, that our situation will be changed.

We want to pray for that.

But not only that, "there will be abundant redemption," and although we still

have that situation, we ourselves will be kneaded and purified in God's hands, which is also included in "abundant redemption."

The issues and problems we have will not be solved, but God's plan and work of salvation will be revealed around us as we are being kneaded and sanctified.

In our church, we have experienced deeply that the presence, words, and prayers of our brothers and sisters and pastors in the church are comforting and the kingdom of God is expanding because they are really struggling with the long and deep pains they are carrying about their families.

Although such things cannot be said to those who are suffering, they are walking in such a way, aren't they?

And ultimately, the Kingdom of Heaven is our redemption. We are sojourners on this earth, and the Kingdom of Heaven is our final hope.

Therefore, we wait for the Lord.

I want to consider a few Old Testament figures for a moment. Abraham waited until God's promise was fulfilled.

Jacob waited for God's word that his brother would serve his brother.

Joseph waited until he had a dream that his brothers would serve him.

They were not without sin.

Abraham could not wait and entered Hagar.

Jacob took the blessing of the firstborn from Esau by deceiving his father Isaac.

Joseph told his father Jacob about his brothers, and in his pride told his brothers about the dreams he had, and they hated him and sold him into Egypt.

However, they all hung on to God's mercy and waited for the Lord, and God's word came true.

(Example) The other day at church school, we looked at the story of Joseph according to "Growth," a Christian magazine. Joseph (as I mentioned earlier) told his father Jacob about his brothers, and because of his arrogance, he told them and his father that he had a dream in which he prostrated himself, even

though he should not have told them. His brothers became angry and tried to kill Joseph, who was then sold to Egypt.

But what does the Bible say? The Lord was with Joseph. The Lord had forgiveness. He was merciful.

And Joseph, thirteen years later, became the vizier of Egypt, and in time, in God's plan of salvation, he was to save his father Jacob and his brothers.

In God's plan of salvation, God's work of salvation and redemption took place, and Joseph was used to save Jacob's family.

Joseph waited until the Word of God came, leaning on God who is merciful.

An unbelieving mother who heard this message at church school wrote to my wife.

"My family is really scattered now, and I think it is because of my own lack of consideration.

But I want to walk in trust that God, who searches for such a family and guides us by shining His light on us, will connect us together."

I saw her admit her own foolishness and weakness, cling to God's mercy, and walk with hope.

I was really encouraged.

The Lord is merciful. He has abundant redemption.

We desire to wait on the Lord.

We, like the psalmist, desire to pray earnestly from the depths of the abyss where God seems to have gone into hiding.

The psalmist sings, "I will wait for the Word of the Lord." But the visible situation is really painful, and our trust in God is shaken there, but we want to return to the Word of the Lord again and again, saying, "I will wait for the Word of the Lord."

There will be times when we fail to wait for the Lord, are filled with anxiety, and make the mistake of overreacting and hitting others.

But the Lord is merciful, so I hope to trust in Him again and receive His abundant redemption and mercy.

<Conclusion

“Wait for the Lord, O Israel.

In the Lord is grace and abundant redemption.

He will redeem Israel from all unrighteousness.”

Let us listen to these words, let us return to the promises of these words, and let us begin this new week fearing the Lord and trusting in Him.

<Prayer>