

## Introduction

- How are we when we come to worship?
  - do we bring the **reality** of our situations with us to God?
  - or do we leave them at the door?
  - I wonder whether we are not just conditioned not to be open and honest and vulnerable with other people, but are we also **conditioned to be happy for God?**
  - to know the great truths, the sweeping promises, to know that God does have all the answers - and feel we can't then bring our turmoil, our questions, to God?
  - do we go into **"church mode"** when we come in through the door?

## Exposition

### (1) Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;

- Starting point in the reality of his situation, in the depths
  - honesty about where we are at - maybe hard with each other, but God can really cope!
- We are all guilty of putting on the Sunday face, the appearance of spiritual health
  - the "I'm fine, are you fine..." thing!
- But Psalmist's response was to **"cry out to you"**
  - rather than turmoil turning him away from faith, driving him off the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, in his turmoil, through his pain he cries out to God
  - note how personal this is; this crying out is in context of a relationship; he knows God, knows what the "right answers" are - here we have a heart response

### (2) O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

- His coming to God is a plea for mercy, a longing to be heard, a cry for help
  - he truly **knows** that God alone can meet his needs, so he comes
  - yet there is a hint that **what he feels** is different: he is pleading that God will answer, almost as if there is a debate between his intellect ("**God will hear, and he can choose to answer in the way he sees fit**") and his emotions ("**will God hear? I'm desperate that he answers! I'm at the end of what I can bear...**")

### (3) If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

- Here is the basis of his coming, the theological truth that gave him a ground for approaching God even in his felt weakness:
  - **God wipes away sin, God is gracious, God forgives**
  - that is at the very heart of who God is!
  - so great, indeed, is the forgiveness that God offers that he **forgets** our sin!!!
- I find that hard to accept, to know!
  - I grew up with the mental image of when we get to heaven **God playing a video** of our lives before his throne of judgement, and everyone being able to see our every misdeed, mistake...
  - but it won't be like that!! **Rather than my sin, God sees Jesus' righteousness;** there is no evidence against us as we come before the throne of grace; Jesus' death has dealt with all of that; there is no record of our wrongdoing!

- **We know how - through the Cross!!!**

### (4) But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.

- Dealt with the forgiveness bit already
- **"Feared"** sounds a strange consequence of forgiveness!!
  - but its not a servile, cowering fear
  - rather it is the fear of awe and respect, of deep reverence
- Don't want to cheapen the depths of this verse, but it is analogous to the way the word **"Awesome"** is sometimes used today in teen culture:
  - if someone observes something they like or admire, and they are American, they may well say **"Awesome!"**
  - they are in awe, they **"fear"** the person who has done this awesome deed!

**(5) I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope.**

- There has been a vast progression from v.1!
  - depths, sorrow, anguish, pain...
  - to peaceful, patient waiting on God, a quietness of spirit that was lacking at the start
- What has happened?
  - though the presenting problem for the Psalmist was his present circumstances, he knew that the prior or more pressing problem was his sin - and the consequent separation from God
  - in coming to God he has been reminded that his sin is dealt with, he is free
  - not just free from sin, but more critically, free to enter a relationship with God!
- This verse is filled with positive anticipation:
  - this is not a dentist's waiting room verse, this is waiting in line to see Santa Claus!

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

- Waiting for the morning - something that will certainly come:
  - we say, "as sure as night follows day"
  - here, there is overtone of hope - a simile of hope!
  - night may seem endless, but morning is certain and its time is determined

**(7) O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. (8) He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.**

- And so his conclusion couldn't be further from the shut-in gloom and uncertainty of "the depths"
  - the Psalmist is liberated from the despair that was present in v.1 so that he is now able to hold out hope, not just for himself but to all his fellow Israelites
  - here is one beggar telling another beggar where to find food!

**Conclusion**

- Honesty with God
- Know forgiveness
- Enter his peace