

# When the Bottom Falls Out: Learning to Pray from the Depths

Psalm 130:1-8 (CSB)

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## **Big Idea**

Our dependence on prayer should mirror our dependence on God — approaching Him earnestly and frequently, especially in times of need.

This manuscript is formatted for posting alongside the sermon video. Scripture quotations are from the CSB.

## Introduction

Nobody teaches you how to wait.

We learn how to plan.

How to grind.

How to make things happen.

But waiting?

Waiting is the one place you can't control.

And that's why it messes with you.

Because you can handle hard...

if hard has an end date.

But when you don't know when...

that's when your soul becomes troubled.

Some of you are in a waiting room right now.

Not a hospital waiting room.

A life waiting room.

Waiting on God to answer.

Waiting on God to provide.

Waiting on God to heal.

Waiting on God to restore.

Waiting on God to avail you with a new opportunity.

Waiting for a fresh start.

And the longer you wait,

the louder your mind gets.

You replay everything.

Second-guess everything.

Assume the worst.

What did I miss?

Where did I go wrong?

What if nothing changes?

What if God forgot me?

And here's where's it dangerous:

In the waiting room,  
you don't just question the situation—  
you start questioning God.

Are You really good?  
Are You near?  
Do You care?  
Did You hear me?

And when heaven feels quiet,  
beyond what we can bear we reach for control.

You push on locked doors.  
Rush decisions.  
Force outcomes.  
Send the text again.  
Make the call again.  
Work harder.  
Sleep less.  
Figure out work arounds.

And you justify your actions by saying.  
I'm just scared.  
I'm tired.  
And I don't know how much longer I can hold it together.

And this is exactly where Psalm 130 meets us.  
It the midst of our waiting that feels like a crushing force that will never relent.

It's a cry for help.

Here's what I want you to walk away knowing...

Our need for God is constant—so our prayers should be constant, especially while we wait.

So if you walked in today with weight you can't shake...

If you're tired of acting strong  
and holding it all together...

If you're at the point where you're saying,  
"Lord... I can't do another year like that"...

Psalm 130 is for you.

Turn with me to Psalm 130.  
We're going to read it together and pray.

Need a Bible? Need sermon notes? We've got you.

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Psalm 130:1-8 (CSB)

1 Out of the depths I call to you, LORD!

2 Lord, listen to my voice; let your ears be attentive to my cry for help.

3 LORD, if you kept an account of iniquities, Lord, who could stand?

4 But with you there is forgiveness, so that you may be revered.

5 I wait for the LORD; I wait and put my hope in his word.

6 I wait for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning—more than watchmen for the morning.

7 Israel, put your hope in the LORD. For there is faithful love with the LORD, and with him is redemption in abundance.

8 And he will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

Straight from the psalmist's own words and situation, I've titled today's sermon:

When the Bottom Falls Out: Learning to Pray from the Depths

This Psalm gives us four movements—four steps—of what real prayer looks like when life is falling apart.

## **1. Cry Out from the Depths**

### **CRY OUT FROM THE DEPTHS. (vv. 1-2)**

Call out to God in the midst of whatever have going on... in that moment... Don't wait.

The psalmist says...

"1 Out of the depths I call to you, Lord!

2 Lord, listen to my voice; let your ears be attentive to my cry for help.”

The word "depths" isn't shallow water.  
It's not ankle-deep trouble.

The Hebrew refers to the deep places of the sea — the kind of water that swallows ships.

Psalm 69:1-2 fills out this picture:

"Save me, O God! For the waters have come up to my neck.  
I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold."

This is person drowning,  
Incapable of saving himself.

This was someone who was on the verge of death.  
This is all hope is lost unless God you do something language.

he's not pretending he's okay.  
He doesn't put on his church face.  
He cries out from the midst of troubles.

And notice verse 2:  
"Let your ears be attentive."

He's asking God to lean in.  
To pay attention. To not miss him.

You know...  
Desperate circumstances demand desperate prayer.

And when it comes to actually praying,  
one thing we know for sure from the psalmist is that God doesn't require polished prayers.

Not only that,  
but God doesn't tend to move until we get real with ourselves and situation.

All your heavenly Father wants from you are sincere prayers.  
Ones that are from your heart to his.

I'm talking about authentic prayer.

Some of you may be thinking,  
"I can't go to God like that."

I'm...

Too messy. Too emotional. Too raw. Too sinful. Too broken.

I've haven't tried hard enough yet,  
after all God helps those who help themselves.

But Psalm 130 says the opposite.  
Your depths—your current struggles—don't turn God off.

And when you come to Him with honesty,  
God doesn't push you away—  
He opens His heart to you.

From the depths of your distress — send your cry upward to God.  
From the depths of His compassion — He will send help down to you.

Speaking of crushing depths...

There have been seasons where I didn't pray like I was drowning — because I was too proud to admit I was sinking.

You know pastors are supposed to have it together, right?  
We're supposed to be the ones helping others out of their depths — not struggling to stay a float ourselves.

But I've learned something:  
When I pretend I'm fine,  
my prayer life gets shallow.

But when I get honest about my depths,  
my struggles, my prayer life is stronger.

I've had moments — planting this church, navigating leadership challenges,  
dealing with personal discouragements — where the only prayer I could muster  
was:

"God, if You don't show up, I'm done. i'm cooked!"

And you know what?

Every time I prayed like that... fully exposed and dependent on God He showed up.

Not b/c I'm special,  
But b/c my prayer was sincere  
And like the loving father He is,  
He delights in taking care of His children.

But it's not just me,  
all of us are guilty of not being sincere when we pray.

Some of you haven't prayed a sincere prayer in months.  
Not because life has been easy — but because: you've been handling it yourself.

You've been in survival mode.  
You've been grinding.  
You've been figuring it out for yourself.  
You've been getting personal loans.  
Putting band aides on your problem while ignoring the real issue.

And prayer has become a formality — not a lifeline.

But you say, Pastor I do pray.  
I say grace before meals.  
I pray at church.  
I pray for others.  
I pray before I go to bed.

But when was the last time you cried out to God like your life depended on it?

Here's what I know...  
Some of you are drowning right now — and you're too proud to admit it.

The diagnosis came.  
The marriage still isn't better.  
You're barely getting by financially.  
The addiction is still winning.  
The anxiety is choking you.  
You're single, tired of waiting, and wondering if God forgot you.

You're burned out... and even prayer feels heavy.

But yet you press on, b/c that what's obedient Christians do.

God doesn't need your performance.

Your fake it to you make it!

He wants your sincerity.

"Your cries from the depth for help"

This week — find a place where nobody can hear you — and cry out to God from the depths.

Tell Him what you've been hiding.

Stop managing your image and start begging for His help.

That's where real prayer begins.

Get real and cry out from the depth... that step no.1...

## **2. Confess the Real Problem**

### **CONFESS THE REAL PROBLEM. (vv. 3-4)**

Psalm 130:3-4

"3 Lord, if you kept an account of iniquities,

Lord, who could stand?

4 But with you there is forgiveness,

so that you may be revered."

Now the nature of the trouble comes out — and it's something different from illness, depression, or persecution.

The problem is: guilt.

The psalmist isn't just in trouble — he's in sin.

And he knows it.

If God "kept an account of his iniquities"

A running account of his wrongdoings —

If He sealed up and retained every wrong — "who could stand it?"

Nobody could.

The Lange's commentary explains that if God "retains sins in remembrance, bears them in mind, remembers them in the sense of imputing them."  
The sinner would be destroyed — if divine justice ran its course.

But then — verse 4 says...—  
"With you there is forgiveness."

Instead of giving the psalmist what he deserved God gave mercy — he choose to forgive.

Notice the purpose of God's forgiveness:  
"... so that you may be revered."

Wait — forgiveness produces reverence?

Yes.

B/c forgiveness exposes grace you didn't earn.

When you get what you don't deserve—  
mercy instead of judgment—  
You worship God all the more.

The forgiven heart doesn't say,  
"no big deal, I deserve this"  
It says,  
"Lord... who am I that you would forgive me?"  
That's reverence.

And when it comes to confessing the real problem...  
Honest prayer acknowledges our need for mercy — not just a temporary relief.

And the reason why is b/c a change in circumstances means nothing if our sin remains unaddressed.

Sometimes the real problem isn't out there.

Sometimes the depths you're drowning in...  
are the ones you created for yourself.

Bad decisions.  
Hidden sin.  
Pride.  
Bitterness.  
Engaging in sin while asking God to rescue you.

I've certainly been guilty of doing that.

And until you get real about your sin...  
You'll keep asking God to change your situation  
instead of changing you.

So, let me ask you hard question:  
When's the last time your prayer included confession?

Not "forgive me for anything I may have done wrong" — that generic, it's basic  
and it costs you nothing.  
I mean a specific, honest, gut-wrenching confession.

Like:

- "God, I've been looking at things I shouldn't be looking at."
- "God, I've been lying to my spouse."
- "God, I've been harboring bitterness toward that person."
- "God, I've been making money my idol."
- "God, I've been neglecting my kids for my career."

Some of you have been in the depths for months — and you keep asking God to  
change your circumstances — when He's waiting for you to own your sin.

You want the situation fixed.  
God wants you forgiven.

And until you get honest about your contribution to the chaos — you'll stay stuck  
in the depths.

How about you do this,  
this week — before you ask God for anything else — ask Him what you need to  
confess.

Let Him search you.  
Let Him expose what's hidden.  
And when he does confess that thing to the Him

After you do that— receive His forgiveness.

That's step no.2...

### **3. Wait with Anchored Hope**

#### **WAIT WITH ANCHORED HOPE (vv. 5-6)**

After the cry — after the confession — comes the waiting.

Look at how the psalmist describes waiting.  
With great anticipation he hopes in the Lord:

“I wait for the LORD; I wait  
and put my hope in his word.

I wait for the Lord  
more than watchmen for the morning—  
more than watchmen for the morning.”

But this isn't passive waiting.  
This is active, expectant, anchored hope waiting.

Three expressions stacked on top of each other.

His repetition reveals the longing of his heart —  
a desperate desire for a positive sign.

And what is he waiting for?

“His hope is in God's word”.

The psalmist isn't waiting for a feeling.  
He's not waiting for circumstances to change.

He's waiting for God to move — in accordance with what he already said he would do.

God made him and promise and he's hoping in that.

Picture it.

There's a nightshift of guards over looking the city, while the inhabitants sleep securely in their beds.

The watchmen stand guard throughout the night until morning.

And here's the key—

They're not wondering if morning will come.

Morning is certain.

The only question is when.

That's the psalmist.

He's not doubting God's character.

He's not questioning God's promise.

He knows God will come through.

The only question is when.

So he's waiting—

with his hope anchored in God.

And the same should be true of us...

Faithful prayer waits with hope — not anxiety.

The anchor isn't your feelings.

It's not your circumstances.

It's God's Word.

The promises he has already made you.

And God is not a man that he should lie, so when God makes promise it's as good as done.

But like I said in my intro, the waiting, is when we tend to have trouble.

He who waits for the Lord must learn to wait in faith and patience, with watching and prayer, strengthening his hope in God's promises.

The best consolation in the night of trial and sorrow is the promise of God that morning will follow.

But, I understand the struggle to wait is real —

we live in a 5G, same-day delivery culture.

Instant streaming. Immediate gratification.

And we've brought that into our prayer lives.  
We pray on Monday.  
We expect an answer by Tuesday.  
And by Wednesday we've moved on to our own solutions.

But God doesn't operate on Amazon Prime timelines.

Some of you have been praying for years.  
For a breakthrough that hasn't come.  
And you're tired.  
You're wondering if God heard you.

If that's you, rest assured loved ones.  
Keep waiting. The morning is coming.

But here's the key — don't wait empty-handed. Wait anchored to His Word.  
Not "I hope this works out."  
But "God promised, and He keeps His promises."  
Find scripture, that speaks to your situation.  
Write it down. Memorize it. Pray it back to God.  
That's how you wait with anchored hope.

That's the third step...

## **4. Call Others to Hope in the Lord**

### **CALL OTHERS TO HOPE IN THE LORD (vv. 7-8)**

When the psalmist started, it was all about him:  
"I cry."  
"I wait."

But then he turns outward, and the reason is because when God meets you in the depths,  
you can't continue to focus on yourself.

You come up with a message for others,  
because you want God to help them to.

So he says:

“Israel, put your hope in the LORD.”

His private guilt becomes public testimony.

And look what he declares to them:

-God’s love is faithful.

He will never not love.

-His redemption is abundant.

God is an all-sufficient Redeemer—

enough for all, enough for them, enough for him.

And verse 8 seals it:

He will redeem Israel from all its iniquities.

All.

Which means this:

What God did for him—He can do for them

And like the psalmist—

when God pulls you out of the depths...

when He restores you...

when He forgives you...

when He answers that prayer you thought was never getting answered...

you don’t get to keep that to yourself.

You’ve got to tell somebody.

Because hope isn’t meant to be held in—

it’s meant to be shared.

Loved ones, your testimony matters.

When God brings you through something,

don’t act like it’s no big deal.

It’s a huge deal, otherwise you wouldn’t have cried out in the first place.

Use your God did it for me story.

That breakthrough? Somebody needs it.

That answered prayer? Somebody’s still waiting on theirs.

That darkness that finally lifted? Somebody’s still sitting in the dark.

We're not isolated believers doing our own thing.  
We're a body.  
And what God does for one  
is meant to strengthen all of us.

How about you find one person to share your what God has done for you story  
with.

Not a post.

Not a text.

I'm talking about a real 2-way conversation:

That's how the church is strengthened.

That's how hope spreads.

That's how people who are drowning get the help they need.

That's step no.4...

## **Conclusion**

### **Conclusion**

BFC, Psalm 130 didn't give us a cute prayer.  
It gave us a roadmap for what to do  
when the bottom falls out...  
and when the waiting feels like it's crushing you.

Because the waiting room is dangerous.  
That's where your mind gets loud.  
That's where fear gets creative.  
That's where you start questioning God...  
and grabbing for control.

But Psalm 130 says:  
Don't reach for control.  
Reach for God.

And it showed us four movements—four steps of real prayer:

1. Cry out from the depths.  
Stop acting strong.  
Stop praying shallow.

If you're drowning, say so.  
God doesn't need polished prayers—He wants sincere ones.

2. Confess the real problem.  
Not vague prayers.  
Not general prayers.  
Real confession.  
Because sometimes the deepest issue isn't what's happening to you—  
it's what's happening in you.  
And with God—there is forgiveness.

3. Wait with anchored hope.  
Not anxiety.  
Not forcing doors.  
Hope anchored in His Word—  
like watchmen waiting for morning.  
Morning is coming.  
The only question is when.

4. Call others to hope in the Lord.  
Because when God meets you in the depths,  
your story becomes somebody else's lifeline.  
Hope isn't meant to be held in—it's meant to be shared.

So here's my final question for you:  
So here's the question:

When you walk back into the waiting room this week...  
what are you going to do?

Will you cry out... confess... wait with hope... and tell somebody—  
or will you go back to control, silence, and pretending you're fine?

BFC — I don't want this to just be a sermon you heard.  
I want this to be a turning point.

So here's what we're going to do.

We've put together a 21-Day Prayer Guide — and I'm calling every person at  
Bridge Fellowship to commit to it.  
21 days. Intentional. Focused. Desperate prayer.

Not rushed. Not routine. Not checking a box.

But the kind of prayer we talked about today — crying out from the depths, getting honest about sin, anchoring your hope in God's Word, and learning to wait on Him.

This guide will walk you through it. Day by day. Scripture by scripture. Prayer by prayer.

I'm asking you to commit. Not because it's easy — but because you need it. We need it. This church needs it.

On your way out, the ushers will hand you your prayer guide.

To those of you who are in the depths today — I want to pray with you right now. Don't leave here carrying what you came in with. Let's take it to the Lord together.

If that you, you can come down front or just stand where you are.  
If you need prayer this time is for you.

Let's pray....  
Let's worship!