

Learning to Pray with an Unnamed Friend: Forgiveness and Prayer

Psalm 130 || Pastor Paul Hahn || 16 January 2022

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: What is your favorite tv drama and why? What themes in it resonate with you?

Worship: [Mark 2:4-7](#) (Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation?)

Sermon Summary for [Psalm 130](#) (Read the passage aloud before reading the sermon summary.)

Prayer is vital to our sufferings (as we focused on last week), but we need it even more because of our sin and brokenness. Psalm 130 offers insight into the powerful change prayer can make in our lives because of God's forgiveness. We desperately need to understand this. Life can and will sweep us away into treacherous waters, when hardship and suffering seem too much. These are the depths the psalmist cries out from.

We need this kind of authenticity with God to endure – to continue walking with Him and not give up. If instead, we deny or suppress our pain, we'll lose hope. The same is true if we take our pain somewhere other than to God. Our Redeemer hears our prayers and moves toward us, whether by directly answering prayer, or indirectly by giving us more of Himself. Our Father is a God who loves to show mercy ([Ps 147:3](#)).

Our need for God will always be deeper and more profound than we realize. In good times, we're prone to gloss over our brokenness. And even in the depths of sin or suffering, we only catch a glimpse of our need for Him. There's a reason Jesus gives priority to forgiveness over health ([Mark 2:1-12](#)): because God's forgiveness is the deepest healing we need. It's our sin, guilt, and shame that keep us from living wholly and rightly with our loving Father. It's here – as we recognize and feel the burden of our sin – that the dynamics of prayer need to surprise us and fill us with joy and wonder.

It's important to note that prayer doesn't earn our forgiveness. We don't have to perfectly confess to be forgiven. Prayers of confession put us in touch with the reality that we are forgiven through the finished work of Jesus. They let us celebrate and enter into the amazing love of God. This is why John Calvin believed the declaration of our forgiveness by God was the most important part of the worship service, far more important than the sermon. We need these words of forgiveness and the reality of their miracle to penetrate deep into our souls ([Ex 33](#)).

We are lifted up from the depths for a purpose: to fear God. This doesn't mean to cower before our Lord; it means to wonder at Him, to be in awe of Him ([Prov 9:10](#)). Because we have a God who delights in us and Who is loyal to us, despite our sin and brokenness ([2 Tim 2:13](#)). This may sound like an odd response to being forgiven, but to fear God is to worship Him. It's what we were created for.

Forgiveness changes everything. Because of it, we may be people of hope. Forgiveness assures us of God's loyal and steadfast love, even when our brokenness and the brokenness of the world weigh on us. And that redemptive, steadfast love allows and compels us to live in hope, to pray with hope, and to celebrate with hope. It also means we can wait in hope, like watchmen waiting for the morning. Because He who has begun a good work in us, will be faithful to complete it (Phil 1:6), for with Him is plentiful redemption ([v7](#)).

Discussion Questions (You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)

Conflict: We are in despair. And we need to be in touch with it.

- Review Psalm 130 together.
 - What actions does the psalm call us to even while despairing?
 - What qualities of God does the Psalm point to?

Complication: The depths are deeper than we may realize.

- What does the Psalmist acknowledge about his or her sin?
- Reflect on the key verse, *“But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared”* (v4).
- How do sufferings of sin differ from sufferings of loss or painful circumstances?

Surprise: We are forgiven! That God may be feared.

- Read [Mark 2:1-12](#) together. Who is forgiven? As a result of this, who gave glory to God?
 - It would have been easy for Jesus to simply heal this man, but His plans were far greater: for all to see His glory and access the forgiveness of sins.
- Do you believe that forgiveness is the greatest of the Lord’s gifts that meets our deepest need? Why?
 - Where do Christians have a hard time tapping into God’s forgiveness in Christ? Where do you?

Good News: This God is marked by his steadfast love. Therefore, we may be people of hope!

- Read [Psalms 63:1-4](#). How is the steadfast love of the Lord described?
- Read [Psalms 33](#). This Psalm describes the Lord in verses 1-21 and then requests for the steadfast love of the Lord to be with them (v22). Take time to end the group meeting with prayer.

Prayer

For use in your personal prayer times, or family or group prayer – the Weekly Prayer Guide is linked [HERE](#).

Engage & Experience: Prayer & Gratitude

Last week, you were encouraged to pray two or three times focusing on the various attributes of God without asking Him for anything. Share your experience with this type of praying.

Prayer lets you celebrate, enter into, appreciate and wonder over the amazing love of God that forgives all your sins. Psalm 130 highlights a pattern for Christians of praying for forgiveness, waiting, and hoping. Take time to pray into each of those this week.

If your group wishes to work through the book [Pray With Your Eyes Open](#) by Richard Pratt, along with the discussion guide, you can find the link to purchase [HERE](#).