

CRY OUT  
United Church of Broomfield  
June 27, 2021

Psalms 130 (Message)

1-2 Help, God—I've hit rock bottom!  
Master, hear my cry for help!  
Listen hard! Open your ears!  
Listen to my cries for mercy.

3-4 If you, God, kept records on wrongdoings,  
who would stand a chance?  
As it turns out, forgiveness is your habit,  
and that's why you're worshiped.

5-6 I pray to God—my life a prayer—  
and wait for what he'll say and do.  
My life's on the line before God, my Lord,  
waiting and watching till morning,  
waiting and watching till morning.

7-8 O Israel, wait and watch for God—  
with God's arrival comes love,  
with God's arrival comes generous redemption.  
No doubt about it—he'll redeem Israel,  
buy back Israel from captivity to sin.

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One great value of the Psalms is that they put into words what we find difficult to express. Most scriptures speak **to us**. The Psalms speak **for us**. They enable us to articulate and bring before God our deepest feelings, our greatest fears, the lingering longings of our hearts, the troubled sorrows of our lives. Jesus hanging on a cross cries out "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (a direct quote from Psalm 22) something He surely learned in his youth.

When buried in the deepest sea, or down in a valley so low, when all you've put together begins to fall apart when suspended in mid-air with nothing solid to hold on to—people through the ages have cried out to the Lord for help. Our scripture reading today is from the Message translation which says, "Help God, the bottom has fallen out of my life." Is that not a common human cry?

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June is gay pride month and this weekend Denver celebrates with its annual gay pride parade. We are an ONA church, "open and affirming." We have been since 2004. We officially recognize this designation each January and we announce it at the beginning of each service. Why? Because it's important. It's important to remember and recognize the battles that have been fought, the struggles that have been overcome and the work that still needs to be done. Gay pride month and **being** an ONA congregation are the results of years and decades of CRIES for justice, freedom and love.

## Many continue to cry out of the depths of INJUSTICE

This past week, Carl Nassib, a defensive end for the Las Vegas Raiders became the first active NFL player to come out. There were many responses of joy, congratulations, positive affirmations and comments on how "it's about time." Despite all of the positivity, there is still a backlash. Nassib has received many hateful comments and many posts have said that he should be fired, he's going to ruin the sport, it's the end of the Raiders reputation ... and those are the comments I can say in public...you can imagine the even less favorable types of comments. "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my cry."

In the last six months, 33 states have introduced over 100 anti-transgender bills into legislation that would curb the rights of transgender people. These laws are far ranging in their scope affecting bathroom access, youth sports and medical care. Several laws have already been passed and predictions are that the effects of these laws will be devastating, because they are rooted in misunderstanding, ignorance, denial and fear. This is the reason why so many marginalized people CRY out of the depths of injustice - for they are oppressed, discriminated against and hurt for nothing more than someone else's fears. "O Lord, hear my cry."

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This last week has highlighted Critical Race Theory. It's not a new idea by any means, but all of sudden it's in the news. CRT emphasizes how racism and disparate racial outcomes can be the result of complex, changing and often subtle social and institutional dynamics, rather than explicit and intentional prejudices by individuals. Like many of the transgender bill being introduced into legislation, there are several bills being introduced across the country that would disallow the teaching of CRT in K-12 classrooms. "Lawmakers who have authored these bills claim that teachers have adopted the tenets of critical race theory, and are teaching about race, gender, and identity in ways that sow division among students. But opponents claim that such legislation will stifle discussion of how racism and sexism have shaped the country's past and continue to affect social, political, and economic systems. Some administrators have already said laws like these would halt their efforts to root out racism in schools. And scholars of critical race theory have argued that the laws mischaracterize the framework."

In a recent testimonial before a school board, one parent commented on the CRT discussions saying, "...our country cannot begin to heal until we deal with the pain, trauma and hurt from our past. We must teach our children the truth about the past and then show them how to be the change we wish to see in the world. We can help them connect the dots from the awful events of the past to the current issues that face our country so that real change can happen. As members of the white community we have got to stop pushing the agenda that diversity and truth and education is all about indoctrination, shaming or placing guilt at the feet of white people. No one is asking you to get up and place your head on the chopping block for the wrongs of the past. People are simply [crying out] for their stories to be heard and taught as ours have been for generations." "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my cry."

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We have all cried out before for various reasons, in all kinds of situations and circumstances. We continue to cry out. Our passage from Psalms speaks FOR us today and it has spoken for God's children since the beginning of time.

Jonah cried out of the depths of REBELLION.

God called Jonah to go to Nineveh. He hopped a boat headed for Tarshish. God called Jonah east; Jonah went west. God called Jonah to preach; Jonah was content to sleep. When the sailors searched for someone responsible for the storm at sea, the lot fell on Jonah, the Hebrew on board who was running from the Lord.

Dumped in the deep waters, then swallowed by a great fish, Jonah cries to the Lord. "In my great distress I called to the Lord and he answered me. From the depths of the grave I cried for help and you heard my cry." With currents swirling about him, seaweed wrapping around him, out of the depths of the sea, Jonah remembers the Lord. If your rebellion against God has gotten you in deep water today—remember Jonah—"Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my cry."

#### Joseph cried out of the depths of REJECTION.

If you're stinging from a sibling squabble, reeling from some family fight, if a parent expects too much from you and your siblings can't stand you — you might do well to remember Joseph who cried out to the Lord from the depths of an Egyptian prison.

I know we all have a little problem with this Biblical dreamer who wore a coat of many colors. Maybe he was arrogant, idealistic, too good to pimp himself to power with Potiphar's wife. But does that justify his brothers' rage or Mrs. Potiphar's lies, or the deep, dark dungeons of an Egyptian slave quarters? Out of the depths Joseph cries to the Lord and discovers "What others meant for evil, God can still work for good." "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my cry."

#### David cried out of the depths of BETRAYAL.

What more could you want than to be the king, a man after God's own heart? With unusual ability comes unrelenting responsibility. **All he needed God had provided**, but seeing the beautiful Bathsheba sunbathing on the patio made him think **he needed what he wanted**. Power corrupts; absolute power absolutely corrupts. How many people have started down the road of destiny only to get sidetracked on the lonely road of desire? We like to splatter their pictures on tabloids, have Congress pass judgments on them and produce TV documentaries about them.

Some people think David wrote Psalm 130. Most likely Hezekiah did. David did write Psalm 51. Here is what he said, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love. For I know my transgression and my sin is always before me." If you have ever betrayed your best, stooped to the desires of the flesh, stepped on the gas of your own moral energy only to find it severely lacking in the time of need, and are still conscientious enough to feel bad about it, you, like David, can cry out to the Lord. "Out of the depths, I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my cry."

#### Jeremiah cried out of the depths of DESPAIR.

We call him the weeping prophet. He said one time "O, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears, I would weep day and night for the sins of my people." When thrown into a muddy cistern for his unpopular prophecies, Jeremiah curses the day he was born. Jeremiah knows gloom, despair, daily agony, but Jeremiah also knows the Lord. The word of the Lord is fire in his belly and passion in his soul. Down in that damp, muddy, old cistern Jeremiah affirms, "The Lord is with me like a mighty warrior." "Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord. Lord, hear my cry."

OUT OF THE DEPTHS WE CRY TO YOU, O LORD. LORD, HEAR MY CRY. That is what the Lord does; hears our cry. The Psalmist found some particular ways that the Lord heard his cry.

With the Lord there is FORGIVENESS (Psalm 130:3—4).

Tracy Bailey stood before the judge with his head held high as the community of Goshen, Indiana, bowed their heads in disbelief. This captain of the wrestling team, member of the student council, good student, from a church-going family, had just been found guilty of vandalizing his school causing thousands of dollars in useless damage. For his actions, he got five years in a juvenile offender facility.

Tracy started his time determined not to bend an inch, to be tough, to hold his head up high; then one day in solitary confinement, Tracy took a long look at himself in a mirror. The sight of himself shocked Tracy. Tears began to flow. He began to pray. One of the guards prayed with him. Someone gave Tracy a Bible. He joined a prison Bible Study Fellowship.

Tracy was released from prison early for good behavior. He went to work and paid off his debts. He made restitution to the school and then went to college. He became a math and science teacher and in April of 1993, the President of the United States honored Tracy with the National Teacher of the Year Award. "If you, O Lord, kept a record of sins, who would stand a chance? But with you there is forgiveness." "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my cry."

With the Lord, there is HOPE (Psalm 130: 5—6).

Evidently this Psalmist had pulled some time as a night watchman. He knew what it was to work the lonely, tiring, scary, shadows of the evening. He knew its danger; he knew its challenge; he knew you could not rush the dawn. You can only wait for the sunrise.

I wait for God, and on his work, my hope relies.  
My soul still waits, until the lights arise.  
I look for him to drive away my night,  
Yea, more than watchmen wait for morning light.

There are many of us waiting; waiting for healing, waiting for opportunities, waiting for relief, waiting for ... oh, so many things. Keep hope alive. In God's time, God makes all things beautiful. "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my cry."

With the Lord there is UNFAILING LOVE (Psalm 130:7).

Henri Nouwen, theologian and well known writer of pastoral care theories, puts it this way. "The Lord kneels before me holding my naked feet in His hands and looking up at me with a smile. The intimacy is too great for me. So I say, 'Lord, you don't really know me, my dark feelings, my pride, my lust, my greed. I may speak the right words, but my heart is so far from you. I am not good enough to belong to you. You must have someone else in mind.'

Then with utter tenderness, the Lord says, 'I want you to be with me. I want you to have a full share of MY life. I want you to belong to me as much as I belong to my Father. I want to wash you completely clean so that you and I can be one and so that you can do to others what I have done to you.' - Slowly I let go of my fears, distrust, doubts and anguish in time to simply let you wash me clean and love me with a love that has no bounds." "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my cry."

With the Lord there is FULL REDEMPTION (Psalm 130: 7—8)

To be redeemed is to be regained, reclaimed, recouped, retrieved. To be redeemed is to be bought back, cashed in. I'm sure that most, if not all of us, have special credit cards that focus on redemption of "something" - airline miles, fuel dollars, hotel credits, shopping dollars or literal cash refunds. Perhaps the ONLY exciting thing about getting a credit card statement is to see HOW MUCH value we've earned....the possibilities of what we can redeem.

WE CRY OUT for many reasons -pain, anger, despair, hopelessness, injustice ... let us also CRY OUT in joy, remembering that we have been redeemed. Redeemed, how great to proclaim it. Redeemed by Jesus' sacrifice - redeemed through God's infinite mercy, We cry out for redemption; our own, as well as all others. "Out of the depths, I cry to you, O Lord. Lord, hear my cry."