

The Heavy Wait of Redemption (partial)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 August 2021

Preacher: Craig Anderson

[0 : 00] That he knows he can't stand before him and survive. See, what this psalm does for us is that no matter our current circumstances, it raises our eyes to our present situation.

And it forces us to look at an even greater situation than what all of us are facing. See, suffering can cause us to curl in. This psalm causes us to look up. And the world encourages us to look in.

Thank you. I'm a big fan of rugby. And we enjoyed the Lions Test Series against South Africa. I don't know if you are into rugby and watched any of those. And I was reminded of the film *Invictus* you might have seen, about the 1995 Rugby World Cup in South Africa. And in that poem, in that film, there's a famous poem called *Invictus* by William Ernest Henley.

Let me read that poem for us. Out of the night that covers me, black as the pit from pole to pole, I thank whatever gods may be for my unconquerable soul.

[1 : 05] In the fell clutch of circumstance, I have not winced nor cried aloud. Under the bludgeonings of chance, my head is bloody but unbowed. Beyond this place of wrath and tears looms but the horror of the shade.

And yet the menace of the years finds and shall find me unafraid. It matters not how straight the gate, how charged the punishments the scroll. I am the master of my fate.

I am the captain of my soul. Starts off similar to Psalm 130, he's in the darkness. It's radically different, isn't it?

Look inside. Find the strength within you. I am the captain of my own soul. I am the master of my fate. Just think of what that poet says.

It matters not how charged with punishments the scroll. This psalmist is telling us something totally different. It really matters. It really matters the charges on the scroll.

[2 : 04] Because when we stand before God, that scroll will be unraveled and there will be a charge sheet even greater than you and I could ever dare believe. And we will realize, if we weren't sure prior, that we are not the master of our fate.

We are not the captain of our soul. Because as he says, if you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? Let me drive that home just further.

Just think of one sin. One sin. Perhaps it's impure thinking. Perhaps it's every time choosing comfort over serving someone. Perhaps it's every time you get angry when you know that you shouldn't.

Just think of that one sin. Just imagine that being marked down every time. Again and again and again. Who, Lord, could stand?

It's a desperate situation, isn't it? Lord, from the depths I cry to you for mercy. Because I can't stand. See, verse 3 is the issue for every person who doesn't follow Jesus.

[3 : 10] Some, like my friends, might say that their sin is what makes them them. But in the still of the night, when we truly look within at ourselves, if we're not ashamed of our sin, then we are in such deep darkness that we have to cry out for mercy.

But, praise the Lord, this psalm doesn't end in verse 3. Look down at verse 4. But with you there is forgiveness.

So that we, with reverence, can serve you. But with you there is forgiveness. Praise the Lord for verse 4. If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand?

But with you there's forgiveness. We have real guilt, real responsibility for our sins. But with the Lord there is real forgiveness.

Now the psalmist can't and doesn't really know how that's truly possible, how this works. But we know. Perhaps you're here and you aren't a Christian and you don't really know how it works either.

[4 : 28] Well, let me tell you. When the God who the psalmist is off to see, when this God in whom there is forgiveness came to earth in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, what did he do?

Well, he bore the punishment. He took the responsibility for our sins. He took the blame, the punishment that we deserve, so that we instead can be forgiven. Does that not make you want to praise God?

Cause your heart to erupt with, Lord, thank you for the forgiveness there is. Makes a psalmist want to. But we'll come on to that in a moment. See, now I think if verse 3 is the main issue for non-Christians, I've got a hunch that verse 4 is probably the main issue for Christians.

How quick we are to forget that with the Lord there is forgiveness. Satan whispers in our ear, doesn't he?

That's sin. It's not really that big a deal. And then you do it and he shouts at you. This is the last one. That was the sin that broke the camel's back, so to speak, of God's forgiveness.

[5 : 38] So what do we do? What do we do when we struggle to believe there is forgiveness of the Lord? When we feel like we are double-minded hypocrites? When we feel like we are a scum of the earth?

When we don't want to come to our heavenly Father in prayer because how wretched we feel? We remind ourselves of verse 4. Just one line.

With you, Lord, there is forgiveness. With you, Jesus, there is forgiveness. There is forgiveness. There is no forgiveness in how guilty we can make ourselves feel.

There is no forgiveness in doing some good stuff after the bad. But with you, Lord, there is forgiveness. That's not the end, is it?

Look how verse 4 goes on. Notice the flow. We are forgiven so that with reverence, so that with fear, we can serve you. Now, why with fear?

[6 : 41] Perhaps it's been mentioned earlier in your series looking at the Psalms. But I think quite a helpful guy to listen to is this clever dead guy called John Calvin, who some of you might know.

And he talks about there's these two types of fears. There's the fear of knowing God as creator. Awesome. Mighty. That's sort of what the psalmist has at the start.

Ben's a second fear of God as redeemer. Fear of knowing that in him there's forgiveness. So what does it mean when we have both those fears?

Fear of God as creator and fear of God as redeemer. Well, let me quote Mike Reeves from his book, Rejoice and Tremble. He talks about this. He says, It's a fear that says, Wow.

You've forgiven me? When we realize that we've been forgiven much, how much more rejoicing is there? I'm glad service because of what Christ has done for us.

[8 : 05] This fear produces gratitude that leads to service. That's what fuels service, not guilt. Reminds me of the story of this girl who was being sold into slavery in America.

And this man bought her in a slave auction. And this girl came to her now slave master and he says, You're free. You're free. Go be free.

Do what you want. And what was her response? I want to save you. Because of what you've done for me and buying me this freedom, I want to save you.

I have gratitude for what you've done for me. That's what this fear looks like. Let's take a step back and see what we've seen in his opening verses here.

The psalmist, let's remember, he's on his way to journey to meet with the Lord, perhaps lying awake at night. He can't sleep, feels like he's the only person, perhaps. And he's deeply aware of his sin and he cries out for mercy.

[9 : 05] He knows that a sinner can't stand before a holy God, but remembers and rejoices that with him there is forgiveness. And look at what happens in verse 5.

I wait. If you're like me, you don't like waiting. Since I had kids, I realized I think every day I'm more and more impatient.

We want instant solutions. We don't want Netflix to buffer. We want it instantly. We don't want to read the whole book. We just want the gist. We want the key quotes. We don't want to be sick.

We want to go to the doctor and them to know straight away what's wrong with us, give us a pill, and everything's fixed. Because we don't want to wait, do we? But the psalmist likes waiting.

Look what he says, verse 5. I wait for the Lord. My whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. I wait for the Lord. More than watchmen wait for morning.

[10:07] More than watchmen wait for the morning. It's a picture, isn't it, of a soldier on guard. Imagine you're a soldier. The enemy is real. Your family, your friends, they're in the city.

Waiting's an active thing, isn't it? Ask anyone on the night shift. They know that waiting's an active thing. Think of parents up late in their wee hours in the morning with their kids. They know waiting's an active thing.

And the psalmist, he's waiting. Waiting. Waiting. Longing. Yearning for morning to come. Yearning more than the watchman waits for morning to come with its safety.

And morning will come. As sure as dawn follows the night for the watchman, so the psalmist waits to be with the Lord. As we wait in the depths of darkness, we do so knowing that morning will come. The morning star, the Lord Jesus Christ, will return. Will redeem his people fully, finally. And why can we wait so expectantly with such confidence?

[11:11] Well, because we put our confidence in the same place as the psalmist does. Did notice that? Where's his confidence? End of verse five. In his word. If we look at our hearts, if we look inside, all we see is sin.

If we look at his word, we see there is forgiveness. We see our sins are forgiven in Christ. And one day we'll fully, finally know what that means when he returns. Like the watchman, the night might seem endless for us at times.

But morning will come. Full redemption will come. So keep holding on. Keep waiting. Keep persevering.

More than the watchman wait for the morning. More than the watchman waits for the morning. Because the return of Jesus is even more certain than tomorrow's sunrise. And so the psalmist, he turns to us, God's people, in verse seven.

Oh, Israel. Oh, Christian. Oh, God's people. Put your hope in the Lord. Perhaps you're doubting that in Christ, in the Lord, there is forgiveness.

[12:31] Perhaps verse four is just not enough for you. Perhaps you've got a bad case of the doubt. So I'll look at verses seven to eight with me. Israel, Christian, put your hope in the Lord.

For with the Lord is unfailing love. And with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins. Put your hope in the Lord.

I don't know most of you. Tomorrow you might be sitting in the chair in the oncology department getting chemicals pumped into you to try to save you. Put your hope in the Lord.

Tonight you might lie awake as your brain goes into overdrive thinking about everything that's happened. Put your hope in the Lord. Why?

Because with him there is unfailing love. In him there is full redemption. His love is not fickle like ours.

[13:32] It's not failing. He's never late. He's always on time. Always what we need. It's his covenant love. He has decided, chosen to love you and be faithful to all his people.

He holds on to you. So hold on to his unfailing love. Remember, it's full redemption. All the sins public, all the sins private, sins committed deliberately, sins committed not knowing, all of it covered.

Fully comprehensive, no fine print. Full redemption in the Lord Jesus Christ. And with sheer elation, he repeats himself, doesn't he?

Verse 8. He will redeem Israel from all their sins. He will do it. The effects of sin one day will be gone. Free from it. Free from sin, that awful slave master.

The psalmist is like, he's like a child, isn't he, waiting on Christmas Eve. It can't come fast enough. He is desperate for his day to come. Day of celebration. He was once down in the depths of darkness.

[14:44] Now he's on the mountaintop, calling his fellow believers, trust in the Lord. Wait on him. He will redeem you. And in a moment, we're going to sing and then turn to the Lord's Supper.

And remember what the psalmist says as we do to one another. Think of that bread broken for you, that body broken for you, for your sin.

Remember the cup. The blood of the new covenant. Looking forward to that full redemption when the Lord Jesus returns.

When he redeems us from all our sins. Let me pray. Our great God and Father, we thank you for the promises that we have in the gospel.

Left to our own, who are we that we can come before a holy God and stand before him in prayer. For woe are we.

[15 : 48] We are undone. People of unclean lips. Aware of the weight of our sin. That unbearable weight. Yet thank you for the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That in him there is forgiveness. In him we are freed from slavery to sin. And so help us to wait expectantly like that child on Christmas Eve.

Knowing that morning is coming. Knowing that he is returning. And we will fully, finally be free from all the effects of sin. And fully, finally be with you forever. What a promise that is.

What a picture the Lord's Supper is that points us towards that. That helps us to keep going. May we be like the psalmist here at the end. That encourages one another.

Reminds one another the gospel. That God has done it. We don't need to redeem ourselves. We can't redeem ourselves. Because you have done it. So our praise, honor, and glory goes to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

[16 : 50] And it's in your name we pray. Amen. We're going to sing again together. We're going to sing Psalm 32, verses 1 to 7.

Then after that, James is going to come and lead us in the Lord's Supper.