

The Joy of Forgiveness

December 18, 2009

Advent is a season of anticipating, of longing, of waiting for God to meet our needs. The author of Psalm 130 expresses his longing as a cry to God for mercy and forgiveness.

¹ Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD;

² Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.

³ If you, LORD, kept a record of sins,
Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

⁵ I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.

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

⁷ 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.

Psalm 130 (TNIV)

The Psalmist recognizes he is responsible for his own plight, and he knows he needs forgiveness from God. So he asks God for mercy and expresses his faith in Him.

Like the Psalmist, we all need forgiveness. Without it we can become weighed down with guilt and shame. Fortunately our God is merciful and gracious, and He wants to forgive us. God's offer of forgiveness through faith in Jesus is a major aspect of His gift to us at Christmas. All we need to do is confess our sins and ask for His mercy—just like the writer of Psalm 130 did.

When God lifts our burden of guilt and shame, He replaces it with the joy of forgiveness. We need only to unwrap God's Christmas present and enjoy the forgiveness He has lovingly provided.

Reflection and Discussion

- Can you recall a time when you felt the joy of being forgiven, either by God or someone else?
- How would you describe the connections between Christmas, forgiveness, and joy?

Prayer

Gracious Lord,

We need Your forgiveness. We have failed to trust You fully, and we have neglected Your commands. We have no one but ourselves to blame for our plight. Thank You that You are a merciful God who will not keep a record of our sins. Thank You for the forgiveness You offer through faith in Your Son, whom You gave to us at Christmas. By Your grace may we experience the joy of knowing that we are forgiven in Jesus.

Amen.