

Good Morning PGCC

March 25, 2020

TO BRIGHTEN YOUR DAY

"Every morning I get up and make instant coffee and I drink it so I have the energy to make real coffee." Steven Wright

ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT EASTER

As we follow closely with the recommendations of health experts and government officials, we have decided to continue our practice of not holding onsite church services at least through the month of April. Sadly, we will not be meeting together in person for Easter, but we are busy planning a very special service on video. You will be blessed. And honestly, the only people who were there for Christ's resurrection were the guards, but everyone still heard about it! So, have no fear. We will **CELEBRATE**, though by video. He is risen!

OUR WEDNESDAY LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

What is Easter all about?
by Don Anderson

Psalm 130

Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord;

² Lord, hear my voice!

Let Your ears be attentive

To the voice of my supplications.

³ If You, Lord, should mark iniquities,

O Lord, who could stand?

⁴ But *there is* forgiveness with You,

That You may be feared.

⁵ I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,

And in His word I do hope.

⁶ My soul *waits* for the Lord

More than those who watch for the morning—

Yes, more than those who watch for the morning.

⁷ O Israel, hope in the Lord;
For with the Lord *there is* mercy,
And with Him *is* abundant redemption.

⁸ And He shall redeem Israel
From all his iniquities.

Psalm 130 is one of 15 Psalms known as the Psalms of ascent. Psalms 120 to 134 were Psalms sung by those traveling up to Jerusalem to celebrate one of the yearly feasts. Most are very short; eight verses or less and easily memorized.

Let's say you are a young member of a family traveling from Galilee up to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which corresponds roughly to our Easter. The 75-mile trip is long and difficult. So, your father leads the family in singing these Psalms. He also uses these Psalms to teach timeless spiritual truths to his family. Psalm 130 is all about confession, forgiveness, mercy, and redemption; perfect for preparing the hearts of his family for worship in the coming week.

The day before the beginning of the Feast of Unleavened Bread is Passover; it is the preparation day for the Feast. The first day of the Feast is a high Sabbath. No one can do any work on that day. So preparations are made on the day before: Passover.

Remember that Passover is the celebration of the exodus of Israel from 430 years of bondage in Egypt. On that night, God told Moses to tell the children of Israel to take a lamb and kill it and put its blood on the doorposts and the lintel so that when the death angel comes to judge Egypt, the angel would pass over the dwellings with the blood and save those inside. God then led His people to freedom from bondage that night. From then on, the father of the family was to teach his children about that night. Hence, Passover is celebrated the day before the feast.

So, as you lead your family to Jerusalem, you would have rope in hand leading a lamb that will be used for your Passover celebration.

The Psalm begins with the writer confessing his sins from the very core of his being: "*Out of the depths have I cried unto You, O Lord.*" He is grieved by his sin and recognizes that his "*heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, who can know it*" (Jeremiah 17:9) and that "*all of his righteousness is as filthy rags*" (Isaiah 64:6). He is aware that his sin separates him from fellowship with God because "*there is none righteous, no, not one*" (Romans 3:10). He knows that he is a sinner and cannot save himself.

The psalmist wants to be clean when he comes to worship, so he pours out his soul before God. *“Lord, hear my voice. Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.”* His supplication is a humble and earnest prayer to God for mercy and forgiveness

In verse 3, the Psalmist says: *“If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?”* This is a picture of God marking down each sin that we commit. When He sees us sin, He makes a mark. Mark, mark, mark. “Oh, did you see that.” Mark, mark, mark, mark. “Oh, I can't believe it.” Mark, mark, mark. Finally, He comes to the end of his whiteboard. Now what? If it were me, I would probably say: “Oh man, my board is full. I'm done with you!” If God did that, who could stand before Him: we cannot stand before a righteousness God in our sinful state. What we need is forgiveness.

Verse 4 says: *“But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.”* Praise God! *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9). This is the reason for Easter!

I lived in Tennessee back in the late '90s. There was a Mennonite community near us up on Russell Creek. In that community, there were several Messianic Jewish families. One of those families, the Wallers, had a very profound way of teaching their children about the seriousness of sin and the need for a Savior. A month or so before Passover, Tommy Waller would purchase a lamb and bring it home to his small farm. He would charge his kids with the task of caring for the lamb. They were to take care of it; feed it, nurture it and protect it from the coyotes and snakes. Over time, the Lamb became like a pet to the children and they grew to love it. They even gave it a name.

When Passover came, Tommy would gather the family around the lamb and explain to them that Jesus was *“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world”* (John 1:29). He would tell them that even though Jesus was innocent, He willingly gave Himself as payment for their sins and went to the cross to die for them. As Tommy prepared to kill the lamb, the children would be in tears begging him not to do it; it was their pet and that they loved it as a member of the family. It was a powerful object lesson for his kids. It was a powerful lesson for me, one I will never forget.

Verse 6 goes on to say: *“O Israel, hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy.”* Mercy means to hold back what we deserve. What do we deserve from God? Nothing except judgment and eternal death in the Lake of Fire! But it's *“not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit”* And, *“neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12).

It's as if God, the righteous judge looks down at our sorry, sin-stained lives from the bench and declares us guilty of breaking His laws, but then takes pity on us. *"He knows our frame; He remembers that we are but dust"* (Psalm 103:14) and He extends mercy to us. So, God gets up from the bench, comes over and takes off His beautiful, white, robe of righteousness and puts it on us. He then takes our filthy, black, sin-stained robe off of us, puts it on himself and goes and pays the penalty for our sins. You see, God made Jesus *"who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him"* (2 Corinthians 5:21). That's mercy.

But God also gives us grace. Grace means giving us what we don't deserve. It's the opposite of mercy. We don't deserve anything from God, yet He saves us by the gift of grace. Scripture says: *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9)

This is what Easter is all about: observing the death and burial of Jesus for our sins. And then celebrating His resurrection as he proved that He was God. The Psalmist then adds in verse five, *"I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word do I hope"* (Psalm 130:5) You see, Israel was looking forward to the coming of their Messiah. We, however, look back to the finished work of Christ on the cross. *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but made alive by the Spirit"* (1 Peter 3:18) and *"That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).

This is what Easter is all about. It's a time of year when we pause to worship God for all that He has done on our behalf. And He continues today to extend His offer to establish a right relationship with us. And it is simple to do:

1. Simply **ADMIT** that you have *"sinned and come short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23)
2. Then **BELIEVE** in your heart that *"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures"* (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).
3. And finally **CONFESS**. *"If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and shall believe in your heart that God hath raised him from the dead, you shall be saved"* (Romans 10:9).

The Apostle John says: *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God"* (1 John 5:13).

And this is what Easter is all about and this is why we celebrate: "Up from the grave he arose; with a mighty triumph o'er his foes; he arose a victor from the dark domain, and he lives forever, with his saints to reign. He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!"

This is what Easter is all about. Amen, and amen!

LISTEN: To continue your Lenten reflection, watch and listen to special music by Wyley and Lyndsay Wilken by putting your cursor over the words [CLICK HERE](#) and clicking.

PRAY: Spend some time in prayer reflecting on where you would be without God's mercy and grace and expressing your surrender, worship and gratitude.

SHARE YOUR ART



Scripture Card by Roberta Mitchell

if you have art you've created (painting, drawing, photography, craft, poetry, etc),
please share it by sending it to us

Prayer Requests: prayerandpraisetree@gmail.com

Blessings, PGCC staff

DROP OFF FOOD FOR THE FOOD BANK

There will be a large grey tub outside the church doors under the portico on the west side of the church. You can drop off your food there, and someone will come pick it up each day.

PGCC SHOPPING ASSISTANCE

If you are at high-risk and/or not able to do your own grocery shopping, you can request assistance through the PGCC Shopping Assistance Program. If you need assistance, please call the office at 916-771-4447 and they will explain how the program works and can help you during this crisis.

CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED

However, we are monitoring the phones and working from home to stay connected with you, support and care for you, and help you continue to grow in your relationship with Jesus.

SEE OUR SUNDAY SERVICES

and other videos on our [YouTube Channel](#).

If you know of someone not receiving this email, they can request to receive it by emailing keapgcc@gmail.com. but they must request it themselves.