

## My Whole Being Waits for the LORD

### Psalms 130 (NIV)

*A song of ascents.* <sup>1</sup> Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD; <sup>2</sup> Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. <sup>3</sup> If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? <sup>4</sup> But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. <sup>5</sup> I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. <sup>6</sup> I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. <sup>7</sup> Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. <sup>8</sup> He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.

“Don’t put all your eggs into one basket.” It’s conventional wisdom to help protect you from total loss. If you go all in on one thing and that one thing goes under, you lose everything. So, diversify. Don’t just keep your money in a safe or under the mattress. Invest in your 401k, multiple stocks, CDs. Have someone manage your portfolio. Make sure work is providing a pension. Maybe look into crypto or bitcoin. That way, if something happens to one of your retirement planning revenue streams, you’ll still be okay from other sources.

Should Christians diversify when it comes to their faith? Should we put our stock in multiple places of help? When you read through the Bible – both Old and New Testament – you see examples of people who follow God but who also put their faith in what they could do, and sometimes even in other gods. I wonder if John the Baptist was tempted to do this.

Yes, John was set apart by God from before he existed to be a miracle baby to an old, infertile couple. He would be filled with the Holy Spirit even while he was in the womb. No doubt his parents, Zechariah & Elizabeth, raised him with the knowledge that he was to be a prophet for the Lord. And when the time came, John went out into the desert wilderness and preached a message of repentance and baptized people to prepare them for the coming Messiah. In fact, it was John who baptized Jesus. He saw the dove and alighting come on Jesus. He heard the voice from heaven say, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17) After this, John pointed crowds of people to Jesus saying, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel... I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. And I myself did not know him, but the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is God’s Chosen One.” (John 1:29-34)

Then you heard our Gospel reading today. When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of Jesus, he sent his disciples to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” (Matthew 11:2-3) Was John afraid to put all his eggs into one basket with Jesus being God’s Chosen One? Did he want to diversify his faith in case Jesus wasn’t the One?

John the Baptist knew the First Commandment as much as, if not better than, we do: You shall have no other gods. God wants us to be all in on him and not put our faith anywhere else. As the psalmist put it: “I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.” (verse 5)

But conventional wisdom says to not put all your eggs into one basket. So, we are tempted diversify our faith, the thing or person we trust to get things done. Want a specific job? Then you better put in your effort to earn the degree, beef up your résumé, make connections because it isn’t just what you know but who you know. Looking for a spouse? You can’t just sit at home praying. You have to put yourself out there, go on dating sites. You want to get better physically? Then you have to work out, see a doctor, take medication, have surgery, do physical therapy. Need to get through the busyness of the season? Make a list and check off the to do items as they get done. Push on. Do your responsibilities one day at a time until the busy season is over. Have faith in what you do.

These efforts in and of themselves are not bad or sinful, but we need to look behind the activities to our hearts. Are we trusting ourself and our efforts or are we trusting God and then using our efforts as good stewards of what God has given us? Do we buy into the made-up Bible passage that God helps those who help themselves? (NOT in the Bible.) Do we believe that God needs help to do things for us, that we are the driving force in control, not God? Is God just one more solution instead of THE solution?

God is not a solution when combined with trusting in our efforts or in other people. God is the solution. He gets our whole trust. “I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope.” (verse 5) To trust in God means to be all in on him, that our whole being waits on him to bring us a solution, to take care of us.

That's hard! Waiting for the Lord to do what we ask him to do is like a kid waiting for Christmas. Time passes by agonizingly slowly. It stretches us. It tempts impatience as we feel like we are about to snap from being stretched so thin waiting for him. It tempts doubt that God will come through, wondering if he is even paying attention to the suffering that we are going through while wait.

Maybe this is where John the Baptist's mind was. Some commentators very charitably say that John sent his disciples to Jesus so that his disciples would have their faith in Jesus bolstered. Yet, my own experience has been that people of strong faith still have times where their trust in God is stretched thin and about to break while they wait. They have seasons of doubt, times when they wonder if God will really come through, if God is really paying attention, if God really will save me, if God is even real.

John had been faithful to God, but what did he get for it? Prison. As each day passed and he was locked away in a dungeon because he preached God's Word, why would he not wrestle with whether or not God would save him? Maybe he was questioning if he was actually called by God to do these things or maybe he just heard voices or his parents made up those stories. Maybe he weighed out whether or not he should bribe Herod the Tetrarch who imprisoned him or the guards to get himself out of prison. Maybe he considered changing what he was preaching, that instead of calling people to repent, to turn away, from their sins, that he should preach something more pleasing.

Do we not have the same thoughts? When we are waiting for the Lord with seemingly no light at the end of the tunnel - not knowing if I will ever get that job, find that spouse, feel better, get through this busy season - when do we start to take matters into our hands or put it in someone else's hands aside from God's? When do we start trying to diversify our faith, even though we know that this is sinful, that it's us trying to take the place of God and impose our will over his? We feel trapped in a hole, wondering if we can ever get out. "Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD; Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy." (verses 1-2)

Even while in the depths, the pits of life, the psalmist put his whole being in the Lord to rescue him. Why? Because he already knew that God had paid for his sins. "If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you." (verses 3-4) His woeful sinful state was one pit, one of the depths, that God had rescued him from. It's the same forgiveness and clean record before God that you and I have because God gave it to us as well through Jesus' life and works.

Since God has already forgiven our sins, we, like the psalmist, have our whole being wait for the Lord to come through for us. "Israel, 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." (verses 7-8) We go all in on God because he always comes through on his promises. His love for us is unfailing, just as sure as the sun will rise in the morning. We can't lose with God. This is why we confidently, not reluctantly, place all our eggs in the one basket of trusting the Lord. "I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning." (verse 6)

To bolster you putting your whole being in waiting for the Lord and to help keep you from diversifying your faith, recall how God has always come through, even though it has taken years. It was some 30 years of his life before John baptized Jesus and saw the direct sign from God that he is God's Chosen One to take away the sin of the world. This is why Jesus had John's disciples report back to him all the other things that had taken place that John hadn't seen so that John could rest assured that Jesus was and is the One. Abraham and Sarah waited 25 years, well into their old age, beyond childbearing years, before they had Isaac, the son God had promised to them. It was 70 years from when the Jews were first exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon before they were returned. It was 400 years living in Egypt before the people of God, the Israelites, were freed, were brought to the Promised Land and took ownership of it. And it was some 4,000 years from the first promise of Jesus that God gave to Adam and Eve before he came as a babe in Bethlehem. No matter how many years it takes, God always comes through on his promises, as he will for you.

This is why "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 the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning." (verses 5-6) God is more reliable than the sunrise. He will come through for us and always for our good. So, put all your eggs in the one basket of the Lord. Have your whole being wait in the Lord. Amen.