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ARE YOU DESPERATE FOR HOPE?

By Vaneetha Risner

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope.
My soul waits for the Lord.
(Psalm 130:5-6a)

Have you ever felt hopeless? Have you ever cried out to God and wondered if he's even listening? Have you ever wondered whether you are going to crumble under the weight of pain and despair?

I can answer "Yes" to all those questions. So many times in my life I've felt overwhelmed, wondering how I'll make it through the day.

I remember one morning when I lay in bed, my body was aching and my mind whirling. The thought of facing another day with no reprieve left me in tears. When I finally felt able, I got out of bed and reluctantly opened my Bible. I didn't want to read it but opened it mostly out of obligation. The words blurred in front of me as my eyes filled with tears yet again. Nothing was making sense, so I asked God to show me something – anything – to hold onto. I needed relief ... peace ... hope.

Part of my reading that day was Psalm 130. As I turned to the passage, I recognized this was a God-ordained message for me. I could echo the psalmist's words: "*Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!*"" I was in the depths, and I was begging God to be attentive to my cry.

Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord; Lord, hear my voice.
Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.
(Psalm 130: 1-2)

WAIT FOR THE LORD

My fingers traced these words, *I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word, I hope; my soul waits for the Lord.* I had been waiting for relief and hope, assuming that was only possible if my situation changed.

As I let the words of the psalm wash over me, I realized I simply needed *to wait* for the Lord. My hope was in him and his word.

It took a while to sink in. A healed body or changed circumstances was not the greatest gift God could give me (though I also longed for those). No, the greatest gift was an experience of God himself and knowing he was with me in my trials. God was not standing far off. He was meeting me right then, through these words in Scripture. God would not leave me desolate. My hope was in him, and not in anything else. He knew exactly what I needed.

When I feel desperate, I forget that my greatest need is not different circumstances. My greatest need is God himself. He alone can give me peace in the storm, hope in his word, and joy in his presence. When I'm desperate for hope, I'm really desperate for God – and when I call out to him, he wondrously fills me with himself.

QUESTIONS TO PONDER

- What do you do when you feel desperate?

- Where in Scripture has God met you? If you can't think of a specific passage, would you ask God to meet you when you open your Bible today?

- What do you need to pour out to the Lord in prayer today? Write whatever comes to mind, releasing your struggles to the Lord.

PRAYER

Lord, some of my circumstances feel overwhelming, and I'm struggling under their weight. Please draw near to me and fill me with a sense of your presence and peace. Help me to put my hope in you. Amen.