

INTRO

- Are you typically a patient or impatient person? In what situations?

The Lenten season is a time of personal housecleaning of our interior world marked by reflection, repentance and returning to God with all our heart. This series aims to embrace that.

READ

Psalm 130

REFLECT & RESPOND

Life is hard. Sin is real. Does God care? This is basically how the psalmist opens their prayer in vv1-3. The Psalms encourage us to approach God with emotional honesty. Prayer may not change our circumstances immediately, but it always changes us. In honest prayer, we bring everything we are to God and, through prayer, we get everything God is to us.

Qu: do you find it easy to be honest with God in prayer? Why or why not?

BUT GOD...

Prayer brings the ultimate reality and presence of God into our reality. And with God, our reality is always redemptive. The many “*but God*” scriptures remind us God, not our present reality, gets the final word (see Gen 8:1, 50:20; 1 Sam 23:14; Ps 73:26; Jonah 2:6; Acts 3:15; 1 Cor 1:27; Rom 5:8).

This psalm hinges on v4:

***But with you there is forgiveness,
So that we can, with reverence, serve you.***

Life is full of tension and in this psalm we see this tension in both the truthfulness of our lived reality (life is hard, sin is real), and the reality of God (with you is forgiveness, love and full redemption). How we reconcile those two realities is key to living purposefully with contentment in our lives.

Qu: why is it important that we honestly express our emotions to God, but also remind ourselves of who He is? What can happen when we leave out one or the other in prayer?

LIVING IN THE TENSION

We are to live in the tension both through revering & serving God (4), and waiting & hoping in God (5-6).

How we wait is important. We are to wait in hopeful anticipation and participation in God's redemptive plan, primarily as we look to and follow Jesus. No matter the situation you may currently find yourself in, there is always a BUT GOD to your reality.

Practically speaking...

The psalmist provides a good framework to pray through a tough situation or challenge:

- Start with reality and being emotionally honest knowing God hears and is attentive to you;
- **But God** — what's the God-factor you need reminding of in your reality?
- **Therefore...** in light of that, what resolve and truth can you take into your reality?

Qu: take a moment to practice this kind of praying for one another.

RESPOND & PRAY

- Pray for one another's burdens, reminding each other of the goodness, love and redemption of God toward one another.
- Take a moment to pray for our church community.