

Thursday, March 26, 2020

Greetings in Jesus's Name,

For those of you on our conference call yesterday\* we read together Psalm 130. A Psalm of Ascents (Psalms 120-134 fall into this category). What the "ascents" refers to is anyone's guess. But I think it was Dorothy Judd who suggested that because the theme of the Psalms is hope, then maybe "ascents" refers to crawling up and out of the pit we find ourselves in. So I went back to reread some of these Psalms and stopped at 126 for some reason.

## Psalm 126

### **A song of ascents.**

1 When the Lord restored the fortunes of<sup>[a]</sup> Zion,  
we were like those who dreamed.<sup>[b]</sup>

2 Our mouths were filled with laughter,  
our tongues with songs of joy.

Then it was said among the nations,

"The Lord has done great things for them."

3 The Lord has done great things for us,  
and we are filled with joy.

4 Restore our fortunes,<sup>[c]</sup> Lord,  
like streams in the Negev.

5 Those who sow with tears  
will reap with songs of joy.

6 Those who go out weeping,  
carrying seed to sow,

will return with songs of joy,  
carrying sheaves with them.

This Psalm looks back on the return and restoration promised to the people of Israel. I think it offers a hint of what the people might expect in returning back from exile or getting back to normal. I suspect it talks about the difficulties that going back to "normal" might entail. I am not sure we will go back "normal," but we will be pulled out of the pit of COVID-19.

The Psalm says we will enter a period of comfort and renewal once again, and that is the promise to God's people then — they who had endured the nightmare of exile. It is the promise to us as God's people today. The

community will return from the wilderness. Like those who wait for the spring season to come, the people of Israel knew God would come to them and quench their parched lips.

Remember today: God will come and bring restoration, healing, and a new tomorrow.

*Prayer:*

Dear God, be with us as we face difficult days ahead. There are many who are trembling in the risks they are taking now for us (healthcare workers, first responders, police, fire, EMTs). Be with them, this we pray. Amen.