

## Occasional Update #24

11 July 2024

**Psalm 130:1-6** Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord, "Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications! If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, so that You may be revered." I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning – *more* than those who watch for the morning.

### THE SILENT TIMES

Greetings!

It's been a while since the last *Update*, but for me it has been very busy, and with a number of extra difficult things to handle, not the least being pneumonia for the last few weeks, and my computer being hacked in some way, having to be "deep cleaned", and couldn't be used for a couple of weeks. Plus other things.

In situations like these, Christians obviously pray, and pray with others. We may pray for immediate healing, or help to overcome in some way, or for God to supply something, and help us in our needs. But sometimes the answers don't come immediately. We continue to pray, read the Bible to hear from God, or just listen quietly to hear what He says. But sometimes "nothing seems to happen". In fact, the question, "Where is your God?" occurs several times in the Bible.

We all face these things from time to time. We may say, "Where are You, Lord?" or "What can, or should, I do?" But sometimes the silence seems to go on and on.

But God *is* still with us. He is still our loving Heavenly Father. He still knows, cares, and is working out His plans *for* us, and *with* us, for our good! As Romans 8:26-28 says,

"Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

Recently I have been looking through the book of Job – what he was like, what happened to him, and to his family; and how some friends spoke to him about his sin, his need for repentance, etc. But Job 1:1 says Job was "blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil!" Yet for 34 chapters (4 to 37) we read Job's dialog and dispute with his friends. Finally, in chapter 38, the Lord answered Job, and revealed to him Who He is, and what He has done. Job was humbled by what the Lord said to him (Job 42:1-6), **but ...** why so long? Job had started with much, but lost much; he found it hard to understand (however he ended up with more than he had before).

We don't really need to always know or understand what God is doing, or why. We need to trust Him.

There are "quiet times – silent times". But our Shepherd is still with us. "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." He is our Protector, our Provider, our Comforter. He looks after His 'sheep'. He even seeks after, until He finds, even 1 lost sheep out of a flock of 100.

A friend gave me a verse from Psalm 42:8, "By day the Lord commands His steadfast love, at night His song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life." In my Bible this Psalm has a heading, "Longing for God and His help in distress". In terms of what has been said above, the whole of this Psalm is (of course) worth reading, or praying through.

Psalm 42 ends with the words, "Why are you downcast, O my soul, and why are you so disturbed within me? Put your **hope** in God, for I shall praise Him again – my Saviour and my God".

There can be peace – His peace – in the midst of the storm. The disciples, in a boat on a stormy day, didn't know what Jesus would do; He simply said, "Peace, be still." Was He saying this to the raging storm, or to His fearful disciples? Both!

We don't always understand what God is doing. Where is He? Why is He so silent? This is where, by faith, we need to **trust** Him. After all, God has said, "Do not fear for I am with you. Do not be afraid for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)

Moreover, God has given us brothers and sisters in Christ to help us – to pray with us and for us; to help in whatever way they can; to stand with us, encourage us, and help provide for us. This is the body of Christ in action!

Psalm 91:14-16 says, "Those who love Me I will deliver; I will protect those who know My name. When they call Me, I will answer them; I will be with them in times of trouble; I will rescue them and honour them. With long life I will satisfy them, and show them My salvation."

**Then we give thanks, praise, and worship to the Lord,  
and testify to what God has done for us!**

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