

# Christmas Awaits

LOVE Awaits

Psalms 134

Pastor Ben Hall – Saanich Baptist Church

December 21<sup>st</sup> 2025



—  
The Psalms of Ascent (Ps. 120–134) were sung by pilgrims on the move, climbing toward Jerusalem. Advent is the same kind of journey: not static reflection, but a faithful movement toward God’s promised presence.

**HOPE: Psalm 130 — Waiting in the Dark** *“Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD... I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits.” (Ps. 130:1, 5)* Psalm 130 names the honest starting place of Advent — exile, guilt, helplessness, and unanswered longing.

**PEACE –** *“I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord... Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ‘May they prosper who love you.’” (Ps. 122:6)* In Psalm 122, peace is: Right relationship with God’s presence, Right ordering of community, Right administration of justice

**JOY –** *“Our mouths were filled with laughter... “Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.” (Ps. 126:5)* Psalm 126 holds past redemption, present joy, and future hope together.

**LOVE –** *“Come, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD, who stand by night in the house of the LORD.” (Ps. 134:1)* Psalm 134 — Being in God’s Presence by GRACE not JUDGEMENT.

God’s presence in Jesus makes God FAMILIAR to us. He reveals God’s NATURE and God’s INTENTION. God is LOVE and God is LOVING.

**Love Moves Toward, Not Away -** *“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” (John 1:14)*

THEREFORE: Love Empathizes Before It Redeems

**Love Embraces Humility, Not Power -** *“Though he was in the form of God... he emptied himself.” (Phil. 2:6–7)* THEREFORE: Love Bears the Cost of Redemption

**Love Commits to Abiding Presence -** *“They shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us).” (Matt. 1:23)* THEREFORE: True love enjoys permanence

Because we’ve been redeemed by Christ, we are able to IMAGE back to God His glory. Because we’re loved, we love. Because we’re blessed, we blessed.

- ACKNOWLEDGE His nearness with reverent worship - Psalm 134 is sung at the summit. Blessing God is the pilgrim’s response to having arrived — God has drawn near, and love answers presence with praise.
- OFFER ourselves in grateful devotion — “Lift up your hands to the holy place.” Release those things that our hands hold on to and find freedom in devotion.
- REMAIN with God, not rush past Him. — To bless God is to dwell with Him- staying attentive, faithful, and loving even when no one else is watching.
- ECHO heaven’s song on earth — Blessing God is aligning our lives with the eternal praise already resounding around His throne.
- Continue to RECEIVE His blessing even as we bless Him — Love is mutual delight - as we bless the Lord, He sends us out blessed.

**Date: Dec. 21st, 2025**

**Series: Waiting for Christmas**

**Title: Love Awaits**

**Primary Passage: Psalm 134**

**Secondary Passage: 1 Jn. 4:19**

**Big Question: How does Advent lead us to the love of God?**

**Big Idea: Advent is not a countdown to Christmas — it is a faithful ascent to worship, made possible by God's gracious descent. From the depths of hope, through the peace of God's reign, into the joy of His restoring work, and finally into the love of His abiding presence.**

**Keywords: Ascend, Activity, Love, Loving, Familiar, Image, Blessed, Bless.**

---

GOING Deeper – LIFE Application Questions

Where did you experience the blessing of God this past week? Was it through a deeper awareness of His presence, confidence in His promises, or evidence of His power at work in your life?

Do you struggle to believe that God truly loves you? How does the Incarnation — God coming near in Jesus — help make God's love personal rather than abstract?

Which of these statements about love do you resonate with most — and which do you find hardest to believe?

- God is love
- God loves you
- God invites you to love Him in return

How does the gospel affirm all three, even when your feelings lag behind your faith?

Read Psalm 134 together. What does it mean to “bless the LORD”?

How is “Lift up your hands... and bless the LORD” both an invitation into God's presence and a command to respond in worship — regardless of how we feel?

Who in your life is God inviting you to love as Christ has loved you?

Spend time praying for that person and ask God to show you one concrete way to demonstrate Christ's love this week, especially during the Christmas season.

How does understanding Advent as an “ascent to worship” reshape how you approach Christmas this year, not just what you do, but how you respond to God?