

What if

a message based on
Psalm 130

What if...? What if God were a record-keeper? What if he's up there in heaven with pen and paper keeping track of every sin we've ever committed? Big sins, little sins; sins only thought about, sins in actuality. For every sin we commit he makes a mark:

Sin list for (your name here): I

And for every sin we commit, he adds another mark.

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The Bible, when it speaks of sin, refers to sins we *intend* to commit, and sins we commit that we are not even aware are wrong. God is up there, pen and paper in hand, keeping track of it all. There are the intentional sins.

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There are the unintentional sins.

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Peter Scazzero writes: "In our culture, addiction has become the most common way to deal with pain. We watch television incessantly. We keep busy running from one activity to another. We work seventy hours a week, indulge in pornography, overeat, drink, take pills – anything to help us avoid the pain... Sadly, the results of denying and minimizing our wounds over many years is that we become less and less human, empty Christian shells with painted smiley faces" (Peter Scazzero, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: Unleash the Power of Life in Christ).

What if...? What if someone invented a machine with wires that attach to our heads? What if the mechanism of those wires was able to project on a screen in visual format every single sin we commit? The projection screen would show it all. It hides absolutely nothing. Do you know how sometimes we're talking away, and we stop ourselves and ask, "Did I say that out loud?" This machine is able to pick such a thing up so that whether we say it out loud or no, there it is on the screen. Every thought. Every word. Every attitude. Every complaint. Every thing we may consider polite, or not. Every thing we want to share, or not share. All exposed to the light.

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

Crying out to God. Why cry out to him? Why express what Leslie C. Allen calls, "a deathlike situation of separation from the living God," this "trauma of trouble" (Leslie C. Allen, "The Riches of his Grace")? Psalms like this one invite us not only to cry out to God; they invite us to do so as an act of worship! I am trusting this morning that God, the Holy Spirit, is here among us, working. I am trusting that he is at work right now impressing on us: what if God kept a record of our sin?

**If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins,
O Lord, who could stand? (Ps 130:3).**

Do we realize what the answer to that question is? The answer is: "No one!" Not one of us could stand under the scrutiny of God's gaze. "None could go uncondemned," none would survive" (L.C.A.). We cannot hide from God the truth.

**When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.
For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer (Ps 32:3-4).**

We may be able to leave this place unconvinced, even unimpressed. We need to know, though, that God doesn't give up so easily.

What if...?

**But with you there is forgiveness;
therefore you are feared (Ps 130:4).**

I have news for you: God already knows what we're really like. What if God has a plan, a most marvellous plan that takes care of sins, that deals with every one of them? His plan comes out of who he is, out of his nature. In fact, his plan comes out of his "side," the Bible says (John 1:18). What comes from the Father's side? His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. God's plan consists of this: believe in Jesus; saved! Forgiven! Don't believe in him; try to make it up on our own by being good; **not** forgiven. God's plan is that when we cry out to him, he will surely answer, and his answer comes through Jesus Christ. More, believe in Jesus Christ, and we have peace with God (Rom 5:1); believe in Jesus, and he cleans us out deep within, cleans our conscience so they can be clear (Heb 9:14). Best of all, believe in Jesus and: *There is no fear in love. But perfect*

love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment (1 John 4:18).

**O Israel, put your hope in the LORD,
for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption
(Psalm 130:7).**