

A Record of Sins

- Something about me you didn't know: I kept a diary. 3rd grade on through high school. Facts. Some special, some not (lunch). Changed over years. Faithful: one per day. End of year review, then boxed.
- Know what I did year and half ago: read again, first time in decades. As read, found myself carried away with childhood memories. What else I found: time in life when wrote sins. Actions took, places went, things did, rules broke; even if not all details written, I remembered who with, what said, what done. Had kept record of sins, written on page. So ashamed: not young man I wanted to be; what Christ wanted. Not KL proud of. Began to think: what if others, kids, colleagues, members knew. Sick, in pit of stomach, ashamed of self, of depths that my sins against God had taken me.
- Feel same way? Think back on things done, feel sick in pit of stomach, ashamed of yourself, of depths that your sins against God had taken you? Maybe never kept diary; if did, what would it say? What record of sins say? Think on your life, fill in blanks for self: I regret when ____; not proud of ____; wish I could take back ____; really ashamed of _____. What would your diary say? Very personal to dig up old memories, isn't it, memories of sins you wish you could erase; know God hates; hate to have others know about; hate to have children repeat.
- That sick feeling in pit of stomach is called shame, guilt; where Ps 130 takes us tonight. Somewhere don't really want to go; but somewhere we must go: down into the depths. **Vs. 1-3.**
- God doesn't leave us in depths; neither Ps. **Vs. 4-5.** Advent: hope – something coming in future, good, a sure and certain promise of God kept by God – we hope for baby in manger. **“In his word...hope.” “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” (Jn 1:14).** Jesus, Word made flesh, born for us at Christmas – he is hope. I know why he came: to lift me out of depths; to die on cross, take away my shame and guilt; teach me that God does not keep record of sins. With God there is forgiveness.
- So in him my hope, in coming Savior, in future redemption. In one week from tonight, on Christmas Eve, I'll look in manger again and see that redemption; see my Savior who loves, forgives me; whom I will see again someday in heaven.
- So **vs. 5-8.** And just as first bright beams of dawn bring joy to soldiers guarding citadel atop city walls, so also the bright beams of Christ's love and forgiveness shine in my eyes and bring joy to my heart; for I know that because Christ was born for me, died, will come back for me – I'm no longer in the depths.
- Know what I did with those diaries year and half ago: read them, thought back on childhood, reminisced about good, repented of bad. Then: burned them. Fire ring, watched them burn away. Not because everything was bad; I can tell children someday about interesting places I've been and memorable things I've done and lunch. But burned diaries because I realized: God does not keep a record of my sins, even if I did. He burns them in away fire, because **“With the Lord is unfailing love, and with him is full redemption.”**

Psalm 130 (NIV 1984)

¹ Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD; ² O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy. ³ If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? ⁴ But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared. ⁵ I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I put my hope. ⁶ My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. ⁷ O Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. ⁸ He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.