

**A Record of Sins**

- Here's smthng re me you probly didn't know: for sev yrs I kept a diary. Fr 3<sup>rd</sup> gr thru HS, I kept diary. Ev night I'd write in my diary what I did that day. Nvr really wrote re feelings or recorded deep thghts; mostly just factual stuff, like: schl, test, lunch, fball practice, wght rm, frnds & I did after schl, TV show wtchd, card game played – dumb stuff like that. Of course, content chngd over yrs – what do as 3<sup>rd</sup> grdr: very diff fr do as 12<sup>th</sup>. But thruout those yrs, I tried be pretty faithful w/diary. Then at end/yr, always fun go back, reread what wrote, think re what did. Then those diaries got boxed up in keepsake box & put away; and ev Jan 1 started new diary.
- Well, few yrs ago, did smthng hadn't done in long time: opened up those old keepsake boxes and, for 1<sup>st</sup> time in decades, read thru those old diaries. And as read, found self carried away w/all kinds/childhood mems: projcts fr gr schl, dinners at home, time w/fam, holiday celbrtns, weddngs, funerals, bday parties, sporting events – I was just replaying my childhd, so much fun! Know what else I found? Found that there was time in my life when I, in my diary, recorded my sins. Seemingly w/o shame I wrote re actions I took, places went, ppl with, things did, rules broke. And even if I didn't include ev detail in diary, my mem filled in gaps; & my mind took me back to those moments, emtns – who did what, who said what, & what was done to avoid getting in trbl. I had kept a record/sins – there it was, written dwn, in my own hndwrtnng, on pgs those red, hrdevr bks. And as I read thru those pgs & recounted those sins: so ashmd. So ashmd bec that's not: young man I wanted be / Xp wanted me be; not the KL I was proud of. I was ashmd of that stupid boy. And I began to think: what if others found out? What if my kids read these bks smday? What if parents/colleagues/parishioners knew? And I remem: started to feel sick, deep in pit/stomach. I was so ashamed of myself & of the depths my sins had taken me.
- Ever feel same way? Ever think back on things done & feel sick in pit/stomach, ashamed of self & of the depths your sins had taken you? Maybe you kept diary too; maybe didn't. But if did, what would it say? What would your record/sins look like? Let your mem wander down the long forgotten for just moment. Think re your life & fill in blanks for yourself. "I regret when I \_\_\_\_\_. I'm not proud of when I \_\_\_\_\_. I wish cld take back \_\_\_\_\_. I'm really ashmd of \_\_\_\_\_." What would your diary say? It's kinda sickening to dig up those old mems, isn't it? – mems of sins that: you wish could erase; that you know God hates; that you'd hate to have others know re you; that you'd hate to have your chldrn repeat.
- That sick feeling in pit/stomach is called shame or guilt; and it's where Ps 130 takes us today. It's smwhr we don't really want to go; but it's smwhr we must go: dwn into depths. **Vs. 1-3.**
- But God doesn't leave us in depths; and neither does Ps 130. **Vs. 4-5.** Advent: season/hope. Hope: when you long for smthng better, when look frwrd to smthng good coming future. But diffnc btwn biblical hope & wrldly hope: wrldly hope is nvr certain; nvr know for sure if you're going get what hope for. I hope: I get this for Xmas; my fam gets along this Xmas; my dad survives surgery; mom's cancer doesn't come back again – but you don't know; you can nvr know, for certain. But biblical hope is diffnt; biblical hope is certain, bec God is certain. When God makes prom, keeps prom; so when you put your hope in his prom, you can be certain he'll keep his word. **"In his word I put my hope."** In his word. **"The Word became flesh & made his dwelling amng us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one & only Son, who came fr the Fr, full of grace & truth" (Jn 1:14).** J, Word made flesh, born for us at Xmas – he is our hope. God kept his word & sent us J. And I know why he came. Came to endure depths of suffering, for me, & show me depths of his love, for me. Came to join me in depths & lift me out depths. Came to tch me (& remind me again/again) that God does not keep record/sins. **Vs. 3-4a.**

- So, “Israel” (K, insert your own name): vs. 7a...**unfailing love**. You may fail: God, self, fam & frnds; and you may fail to see how anyone, much less almighty God, cld possbly stomach you, let alone forgive you. But: vs. 7. Xmas Eve is in 9 days. This Xmas, as you once again look over shldr/shphrd & gaze into manger, you will be looking at your redmptn. That Xp child is your redeemer; that baby is your God, who really does love you, and really does forgive you. Othrws, he wld’ve nvr let himself be placed in manger or nailed to cross. But: vs. 7 (K, insert your own name).
- So, vs. 6. And just as the 1<sup>st</sup> bright beams/dawn bring joy to the soldiers standing guard on the city walls, so also: bright beams of “love’s pure light” “illumine my hrt, my soul” – bec I know vs. 8 – which is the psalm’s way/saying: J lifts me out/depths and does not keep record/sins.
- Know all those diaries I told you re? Know what I did w/them? I read thru them, cover/cover; thght back on my chldhd; reminisced over good, repented of bad. Then know what I did? Burned them. Burned them, in fire ring in backyard; watched them all burn away – not bec evthng in them was bad. I can tell my kids anytime re intrstng places I’ve been & memrbl exprncs I’ve had & lunch ate 30 yrs ago. But I burned those diaries bec I realized: God does not keep a record of my sins, even if I did. He burned them away, in fire/cross. So, vs. 7 (insert your name).

### Psalm 130

<sup>1</sup>Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD; <sup>2</sup>Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

<sup>3</sup>If you, LORD, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? <sup>4</sup>But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

<sup>5</sup>I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. <sup>6</sup>I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

<sup>7</sup>Israel, put your hope in the LORD, for with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. <sup>8</sup>He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.