

PS 130 Reflection Guide

- 1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!
- 2 O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!
- 3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?
- 4 But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.
- 5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;
- 6 my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.
- 7 O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.
- 8 And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

THE SINKHOLE... *1 Out of the depths...*

Have you ever experienced the depths to the point that our your own worth as a person is threatened? Has your value as a creature made in the dignity of God been called into question? Has your own destiny as an eternal souls been jeopardized? Have you felt that you might in the end be... nothing? (Peterson)

So maybe you have felt like this or are now... but you don't talk (or pray) like this. The Psalms of Ascent and the Psalms are good for us. **they expose our tendency to not admit how we are really feeling or doing.** That comes from internal pride and our religious culture... because if we are trying to impress others or God with our good record or good life, **we are psychologically unable to be honest about being overwhelmed.** We need to actually to cry out to God.

When do you or when did you feel like this?

Did anyone else know?

What affect did it have on the understanding of your own overwhelming iniquity before God?

Coping mechanisms for our guilt.

1) **move the standard.** Don't let this archaic morality guilt trip you... you set your own standard. But does this work? Can we live up to our own standard?

2) **"there is no standard"** We take a vague notion that God is loving to mean there is no objective standard. We assuage our guilt by thinking that God is therefore obligated to forgive us. But vague notions about God's love... leave us numb to the seriousness of sin. And leaves us wondering, never sure...

3) **Vent our guilt.** Outside the church, we make ourselves feel better by "confessing" to others. When they accept us (in even the most scandalous circumstances) we feel we are ok...even when we can't accept ourselves. In the church, sympathetic ears will unconsciously allow guilt to go undealt with. Saying I have the same problem, lets all be guilty together.

What coping mechanism (that falls short of confession and repentance and trusting in Jesus) do you to employ?

So what does the psalmist do instead?

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord! 2 O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!

This guy cries **out to the Lord**. Does not try to manage, does not try to negotiate with plea bargains, promises to never do _____ again. He is now crying out to God... Why? Ps 38: 4 *For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.ongoing perspective.* He sees that iniquity is too big for him... too big for any of us. What does he need?

A ROPE - (with two strands: the standard and the redeemer)

1) the standard: *3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?*

If God "watches" our sins we cannot stand. *Heb 4: 13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.* Only his eyes matter. This is the scariest and best news ever.

And why is this good news???

1) It can seem oppressive, un-american and discount the freedom of the human spirit. BUT is anyone really free from "eyes" of our friends, parents, boss, hero? When deciding what shirt to put on, to what job you will take, to who you marry... Do you ever wonder what THEY would approve of? If not checked, this can be absolutely paralyzing. If we can't live up to their approval, to be ruled by these eyes is awful. **You can be done with the arbitrary and repressive opinions of everyone else, if we see that only God's eyes matter.**

2) It lets us know our REAL problem. We all feel a sense of something not being right and many of us try to fix all the "things" that seem to be the problem: Our obligation to God.

3) It's the only way to get over our shame. "iniquity" pursues the question of sin in our constitution. Iniquity is what we **ARE** rather than what we **DO**. Pictorially, we are like a **warped timber.** " We have always seen ourselves as honest, faithful, caring... we've said we would never fail our spouses, our friends, our church... so when you fail and you realize we are NOT what we thought we were or realize we will not be what we hoped.. This is when we realize we are warped, no longer can be used for the reason it was created. This is when iniquity goes over our head and we feel like we are coming to "nothing". The only way out is to throw ourselves before the eyes of God.

1 Cor 4:3 But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself. 4 For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.

It's the Freedom of Self-Forgetfulness. (book on the guest table) There is no way to get over the oppressive eyes of others, there is no way to get over our own shame. **The only freedom is seeing God's ways as the objective standard and his eyes as the only one that matters.**

What's the shaping, directing vision of yourself? Describe the person you have always thought you were or wanted to become?

**What "iniquity" have you seen in yourself as a fatal blow to this vision?
Have you felt shame over this? Have you felt like you were coming to "nothing"?**

2) The Redeemer - the second strand.

So... what does God "see" when he sees us? He sees our Redeemer.

4 But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. 7 O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. 8 And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

We need to embrace God's eyes, the objective standard and we need a redeemer.

1) Frees us from Guilt. Jesus on the cross says to us... "there IS an objective standard that you have not met and so your guilt is real. But I am here experiencing God's displeasure, the depths of sin. God HAS marked iniquities, but he's marked your iniquities on me. It is YOUR sin that has gone over my head on the cross where I have taken every reason for your guilt. So you can now be forgiven.

2) Frees us from shame. We don't just need to get rid of what we have done (forgiveness) we need to get rid of what we are.. iniquity... warped wood. To get over our shame, we need to know that we have RIGHTEOUSNESS before God. I am laying down my perfect record, the one that met God's standard, the life that always did the Father's will. You are going to be saved by MY LIFE . (Rom 5:10)

This means that no matter how much we have failed God, our loved ones, and ourselves. No matter how much we have screwed up our lives and become everything we said we would never be and done everything we said we would never do. No matter how much shame we feel. God eyes see us as if we had done EVERYTHING RIGHT! Jesus is the perfect spouse when we are not faithful. He is the perfect friend when we don't care. He is the perfect parent when fail our kids. This is what this psalm writer calls "plentiful redemption." Jesus IS the only fulfillment of who we thought we were or want to become.

Consider some of the iniquity the Community has described above.

In particular, how does Jesus take away the guilt of it?

How can the perfect record of Jesus, the successful fulfillment of our personal vision, free us from the shame we feel from our failure?

THE GRIP

5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; 6 my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.

He sees and has gripped it. How do we know? He's waiting, trusting...

1. **He trusts in this redeemer and this righteousness alone.** He's stopped justifying his actions or avoiding the standard.
2. **He trust in God's word.** Embraces the objective standard AND the objective forgiveness.
3. **He's worshipping.** *4 But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.* Forgiveness after the depths leads to arresting awe and worship that translates to obedience.
4. **He's enduring...** Like the dawn, deliverance does come, but it always takes longer than you think. There is a sense in which we spend our whole lives in the depths. We never getting over needing to be saved. In fact, we get more desperate and helpless the more we know ourselves.

What does gripping the rope, the standard and the redeemer, look like for you in your particular depths?

What means of grace could God use to help you keep your grip?