

Psalm 130

Forgiven Followers – Leaders version

A one hour study

Check in – with the group sitting in a semi circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they are and how they're feeling about studying the Bible today.

Read Psalm 130

Explain that a psalm is a prayer or a song that has been written down.

What does the passage say and mean?

40 minutes

1. **SHOUT-OUT** What emotion do you think the person who wrote this was feeling? Try to use one word answers.

Relief, forgiven, despairing, concern?

2. What is sin?

Let the group try to formulate a definition, and then round up by giving them a clear definition.

Sin is rebellion against God – anything that is against God's ways, or doesn't put God first in our lives and recognise him as our King. Sin isn't just sexual stuff (this may be a misconception from the way language is used in UK) – it is anything, including bad thoughts, bad attitudes, bad words, bad actions etc.

3. Why is sin so offensive to God?

Let the group try to work it out, and round up with a clear definition.

The Bible (this verse in fact) says that we can't stand, i.e. be, in God's presence with our sin. God is holy, which means 'set apart'. One of the ways that God is set apart from people is that he has no sin in him; he has not and cannot sin.

God cares about right and wrong. If he didn't care about right and wrong, and was able to ignore sin, it would mean he didn't really care about us.

God is deeply offended and angered by sin – and not just the big stuff, it's all of it. Sin is so offensive to God that it cuts us off from him. Sin destroys our relationship with God, separating us from him.

4. What is the answer to the question in v3?

No-one could stand in God's presence if God kept a record of our sins (held them against us).

5. Why do you think the psalmist cries out the prayer in v1-2?

He knows he is a sinner, so he is crying out to God for mercy (asking God not to give him what he deserves). He has realised that his sin has cut him off from God and he is begging God to do something about it – he knows that he is helpless to fix the problem himself.

6. So far, it's been bad news. What is the hope that v4 gives us?

That God is forgiving.

7. What has God done for us that means that we can be forgiven?

Jesus, the Son of God, has died on the cross to pay for our sins, and he's risen from the dead, conquering death, so that we can have eternal life.

(The psalm was written before Jesus came. People who trusted God before Jesus died were forgiven. The forgiveness before Jesus came was fulfilled when he came, Hebrews 13. Don't go into this unless someone asks!)

8. In the newest version of the Bible (NIV 2011), v4 reads, 'But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you'. Why do you think being forgiven relates to serving God?

This verselinks being saved and following Christ. Our lives should reflect our love for Jesus. Being a Christian isn't just about being forgiven – it's about following Jesus! If we understand what Jesus has done for us, in his life, death and resurrection, and start to understand how much he must love us in order to have done that for us, then our lives should start to reflect our love for him, which means that we start to follow him – i.e. live in obedience to him, Jn 14:23. As we live in obedience to him, we start to serve him.

9. Read v5-6. What do you think the psalmist means?

Let the group brainstorm on this – they are not likely to get the 'right' answer, but will probably have some good insights. Then give them the answer in it's original context:

Watchmen refers to the men posted on town walls to watch out for trouble from outside armies overnight. They wait eagerly for the morning because it means 1. the passing of danger (darkness) and 2. the end of their shift! So to wait as a watchmen waits for the morning is to wait in eager expectation.

The psalmist is waiting for the Lord (God) because his hope is in God's word. He's waiting to see God's word, his promises, fulfilled. God had made promises to the people in the OT that he would be their God and they would be his people, he would send them a saviour and give them peace. The psalmist is waiting, and watching, for these things to happen.

10. Read v7-8. Who does the psalmist call to come to God and why do you think he does this?

He calls Israel, the nation. The psalmist knows that God's promises of unfailing love and forgiveness (redemption) will be fulfilled in everyone who repents and believes so he's calling God's people to respond.

How can I live according to these truths in my life?

10 minutes

1. What do you think it means to follow Jesus? Be honest, are you a follower, or just a supporter, at the moment?

Following is a dynamic thing, you can't follow someone while standing still! It means walking in their footsteps, and going the way they're going. Following Jesus means to follow his teaching and follow his example, bringing your whole life under his authority and allowing him access into your whole life, which will change you. This involves reading / listening to the Bible – that's where God has revealed what he is like and how we should live as His followers.

It's important that people understand that following Jesus isn't the easy option – it can be tough, but if you know that he's died and risen for you, it's worth it.

2. Read 1 John 1:8-9. Have you repented and believed in Jesus' death and resurrection?

Do you know that your sins are forgiven?

(We know that the two questions are basically asking the same thing, but I've found that a lot of people give opposing answers... It's helpful to ask both questions to uncover misunderstanding and lack of assurance of forgiveness).

3. The psalmist knew that God's forgiveness was open to all who repented and believed, and he called out to his people to put their hope in God. Who can you share the truth about God's forgiveness with this week?

Try to come up practical examples, don't just say 'everyone' – try to pin down specific people or groups e.g. my cell mate, my family, people on the wing.

Check out – with the group sitting in a semi circle go round and ask everyone, including leaders, how they found the study and if they are safe to go back to the cell.



Psalm 130
Forgiven Followers

Read Psalm 130

What does the passage say and mean?

1. **SHOUT-OUT** What emotion do you think the person who wrote this was feeling? Try to use one word answers.

2. What is sin?

3. Why is sin so offensive to God?

4. What is the answer to the question in v3?

5. Why do you think the psalmist cries out the prayer in v1-2?

6. So far, it's been bad news. What is the hope that v4 gives us?

7. What has God done for us that means that we can be forgiven?

8. In the newest version of the Bible (NIV 2011), v4 reads, 'But with you there is forgiveness, so that we can, with reverence, serve you'. Why do you think being forgiven relates to serving God?

9. Read v5-6. What do you think the psalmist means?

10. Read v7-8. Who does the psalmist call to come to God and why do you think he does this?

How can I live according to these truths in my life?

1. What do you think it means to follow Jesus? Be honest, are you a follower, or just a supporter, at the moment?

2. Read 1 John 1:8-9. Have you repented and believed in Jesus' death and resurrection? Do you know that your sins are forgiven?

3. The psalmist knew that God's forgiveness was open to all who repented and believed, and he called out to his people to put their hope in God. Who can you share the truth about God's forgiveness with this week?