

Psalm 130

Sin / forgiveness – 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?

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 etc

2. **Read v1-2.** What does the writer ask God for and what does this word mean?

Mercy = not to give someone what they deserve.

3. What would make someone ask for mercy?

Presumably, the knowledge that what you deserve is not good, and you are asking to be let off.

4. Why do you think someone might be having this conversation with God?

They know that what they deserve from God is not going to be good / nice / favourable.

5. **STICKERS** **Read v3.** What is sin?

Read out the stickers, then give a definitive answer.

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.

6. What does v3 tell us about how God feels about our sin?

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, (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 sinned, and cannot sin.

God cares about right and wrong. If he didn't care about right and wrong, and was able to ignore our sin, it would mean that 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. On a forever basis, the Bible calls this separation from God 'hell'.

7. Now you've worked through Q5-6, why do you think the psalmist cries out the prayer of 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.

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

That God is forgiving.

Spend some time working out / explaining what forgiveness is – a conscious decision to stop holding something against someone, to stop holding a grudge, to stop seeking revenge / bad outcomes for them.

9. 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'. How do you think being forgiven relates to serving God?

This verse links being saved and following Christ. Our lives should reflect our love for God. Being a Christian isn't just about being forgiven – it's about living his way because we love him and want to obey him.

10. Read v7-8. 'Israel' is the name of God's people, before Jesus came. What does the psalmist tell Israel to do, and why do you think this is?

He tells them to put their hope in God i.e. to trust him. The psalmist knows that God's love is unfailing love and that in him is full forgiveness (redemption) – he doesn't want anyone to miss out!

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

Sin / forgiveness

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?

1. **SHOUT-OUT** What emotion do you think the person who wrote this was feeling? Try to use one word answers.
2. **Read v1-2.** What does the writer ask God for and what does this word mean?
3. What would make someone ask for mercy?
4. Why do you think someone might be having this conversation with God?
5. **STICKERS** **Read v3.** What is sin?
6. What does v3 tell us about how God feels about our sin?
7. Now you've worked through Q5-6, why do you think the psalmist cries out the prayer of v1-2?

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

9. 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'. How do you think being forgiven relates to serving God?

10. Read v7-8. 'Israel' is the name of God's people, before Jesus came. What does the psalmist tell Israel to do, and why do you think this is?