

What is Your Record?

Joe Slater

“If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?” (Psalm 130:3).

What if God kept a ledger, recording every sin you commit? What would your record look like? How many pages would it take to write down all of them? I don't want even to think about mine!

The psalmist asked a good question. If God were to keep such a record, who could stand? That is to say, who would be able to appear before God in confidence that he was acceptable? The question is, of course, rhetorical, implying that no one could do so. *“There is none righteous, no, not one”* (Romans 3:10 quoting Psalm 13:3).

Fortunately for the Psalmist and for us, that isn't the end of the story. Immediately after implying that our sins keep all of us from being acceptable to God, the inspired writer said, *“But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared”* (Psalm 130:4). Rather than keeping track of our sins to hold them against us, God forgives (sends those sins away and releases us from their bondage). As Christians, we ought to understand that even better than the Psalmist did, for we know about the blood of Christ that washes sins away. Let us greatly revere Him!

This forgiveness is reinforced by two other qualities. *“With the Lord there is mercy”* (Psalm 130:7a). God sees our pitiful condition and acts to give us a remedy. And that remedy consists of redemption. *“And with the Lord there is abundant redemption”* (310:7b). When we sin, we sell out to the Devil. The Lord redeems us (buys us back). And He does so, not meagerly, but abundantly! Jesus' blood is more than adequate to atone for our sins.

In Christ, your record of sin is erased. Praise God!

A Lamp unto My Feet

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” (Psalm 119:105). What lessons can we learn from that statement?

The world is dark. It's in a constant state of moral and intellectual darkness. We have more education today and less wisdom, much as Paul was writing about the state of Corinth in the first chapter of his first epistle to them. People make foolish decisions. The world is also dark spiritually. Satan has numbed people's minds. They don't want to see the light of the glory of God in Jesus Christ, Who is the light of the world (John 8:12) and the Word of God incarnate (John 1:8).

The way is definite. How do we make it through this dark world? God has marked out a definite path for each one of us, and we don't have to be afraid of where it leads. It's a path of life, blessing and righteousness.

Our walk is deliberate. As we take each step, we see more of what God has for us. Sometimes I would like to have a spotlight that shines for miles down the road. But God says, "You're going to learn to walk by faith. You're going to learn to walk by patience, by My promise."

The word is dependable. That lamp of the word will not go out, and it will not lead us astray. When you read your Bible and let its truth shine on your path, God will show you what He wants you to do. Because your walk is by faith, you can see ahead only a step at a time. Be encouraged that the way is definite and deliberate, and that God's word is dependable, for Jesus Christ is the way (John 14:6). He will lead you!

--David R. Ferguson (via *Bulletin Gold*)

Use Them or Lose Them!

One young man, in trying to explain to his parents why he didn't have a better-paying job after receiving a fine college education, said: "When opportunity knocked, my roommate answered the door!"

I believe that God gives individuals and churches opportunities to do good for Him. Jesus said to the church at Philadelphia, "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it . . ." (Revelation 3:8).

We must believe that whatever God asks of us, He gives us the opportunities to fulfill the responsibility. In asking us to teach and expand His flock, those opportunities will be there for individuals as well as churches.

If I am dull and listless as a Christian, I won't see those opportunities. Sometimes they are like shadows on the ground or puffs of smoke: fast and fleeting. At other times they may linger for a while, like a lazy cloud. The point is that we must be wise enough to see them and then do what those opportunities afford at the moments they are available.

When it comes to God-given opportunities, we either use them or lose them.

--Wayne Robbins (Arkansas City, KS) via *Old Paths*

Satan disguises submission to himself under the ruse of personal autonomy. He never asks us to become his servants. Never once did the serpent say to Eve, "I want to be your master." The shift in commitment is never from Christ to evil; it is always from Christ to self. And instead of His will, self-interest now rules, and what I want reigns.

And that is the essence of sin.

--Dennis F. Kinlaw