



The 4 Laws of Holes

Psalms 130

Scripture

Psalm 130:1-4

- Out of the **depths**, I cry to you, **O LORD**; O Lord, hear my voice.
- Let your **ears** be attentive to my cry for **mercy**.
- If you, **O LORD**, ...
 - kept a record of **sins**,
 - **O Lord**, who could stand?
- But with you, ...
 - there is **forgiveness**;
 - therefore, you are feared.

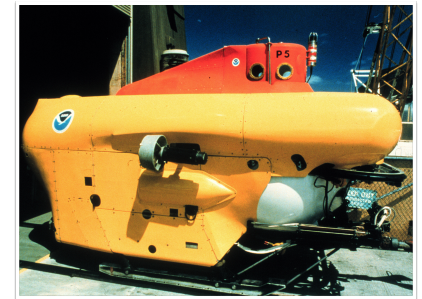
Scripture

Psalm 130:5-8

- I **wait** for the **LORD**, my soul **waits**, and I put my **hope** in his word.
- My soul **waits** for the Lord ...
 - more than **watchmen** wait for the morning,
 - more than **watchmen** wait for the morning.
- **O Israel**, put your **hope** in the LORD, for ...
 - with the **LORD** is unfailing love, and
 - with him is full redemption.
- He himself will redeem **Israel** from all their **sins**.

Introduction

- On August 29, 1973, **Pisces III**, a small Canadian deep-sea **submersible**, sank to the floor of the Irish Sea at a depth of nearly 1,600 feet.
- **Two men** were inside this capsule of **death**.
- When a **rear hatch** was accidentally opened, seawater rushed in, causing the **tiny sub** to plummet like a rock to the **bottom of the sea**.



Introduction

- It took more than **three days** to rescue the pair, and
 - when they were finally reached,
 - the **two men** had only 12 minutes of oxygen left.
- They'd been **trapped** in the crushing depths of the sea for 84 hours.
- It was the **deepest** underwater rescue in history.



Introduction

- The **Kola Superdeep Borehole** goes even deeper.
- It is the most jaw-dropping, radical, human-made hole on the planet and the deepest artificial point on the Earth.
- The **wicked shaft**, built by the Soviets during the Cold War, is **40,230** feet deep.
- It is so deep that **locals** call it the **“well to hell”** and swear they can hear the screams of souls writhing in hell.
- The temperature at that depth is 1,000 C° or 1,832° F, which is **very hot**.



Making Bad Situations Worse

- At the bottom of such an **abyss**, the writer of Psalm 130 thought he was just about to **lose hope** of ever seeing the light of day.
- It's quite likely that the **holes** in which we find ourselves are figurative but real, nevertheless.
- Even in the face of **rescue**, we instinctively panic, like a drowning victim trying to climb out of the water on top of a lifeguard.
- We tend to **escalate** rather than de-escalate, defuse, calm down, or lighten up.
- We're **experts** at making **bad situations** worse.



Stop Digging

- The most **pertinent advice** for people in situations like this has been attributed to Will Rogers, Bill Clinton, cowboys, Warren Buffett and Pat Robertson — all of whom knew of what they spoke:
 - “The first thing to do when you find yourself in a **hole** is to stop digging.”
 - Makes sense, doesn't it?
- Unfortunately, **most people** in a hole only stop digging for a bigger shovel.



First Law of Holes

- So this, we may safely say, is the **First Law of Holes**.
- When you find that you've unwittingly dug yourself into a hole, **stop doing what you're doing**, which is **exacerbating** the situation.
- In other words, ...
 - stop adding **fuel to the fire**,
 - pouring **gasoline on the fire**, and
 - adding **insult to injury**, and so on.



11 Simple Ways to Make Things Worse!

1. Get visibly angry.
2. Raise your voice.
3. Have a stare-down.
4. Be problem-oriented.
5. Use "You" statements.
6. Say, "Calm down."
7. Get the last word.
8. Correct every minor detail.
9. Dig your heels in.
10. Get sarcastic.
11. Do all the talking.



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Second Law of Holes

- The **Second Law of Holes** is, "Don't dig a hole for others."
 - *If a man digs a **pit**, he will **fall into it**; if a man **rolls a stone**, it will **roll back on him**.* (Proverbs 26:27 NIV)
 - *He who digs a **hole** and scoops it out **falls into the pit he has made**.* (Psalm 7:15 NIV)
- In other words, don't lay traps for your **enemies**. You're likely to **fall** into the hole you dug.
- Consider **Haman's** end in the story of **Esther**, when he died on the very gallows he had constructed for Mordecai.



Third Law of Holes

- The **author** of today's psalm reading is in a **hole**. *Out of the **depths**, I cry to you, O LORD. LORD, hear my voice!* (v. 1).
- Obviously, the scene is of a person in a **pit** from which escape is impossible.
- From the **bottom** of this pit, he's now **hollering** for help. "LORD, hear my voice!"
- This is the **Third Law of Holes**, then, is to **cry for help**.
- This might seem obvious, but in a culture where independence and "**rugged individualism**" are seen as virtues, **crying** in any way, shape, or form is not always tolerated.



Third Law of Holes

- Asking for help might be okay if it is **politicians** looking for votes.
- But **polite, intelligent, and wise persons with strong emotional IQs** do **not ask** people for help, especially financial help.
- For many of us, **we don't even ask** for **directions**.
- God forbid we should think of **asking** for more.
- But the Bible teaches us that it is not only okay to ask God for help; it is **almost required** if we **hope** to dig ourselves **out of holes** instead of **into them**.



Third Law of Holes

- Again the writer of Psalm 130 says, *Out of the **depths**, Lcry to you, O LORD.*
- So begins the psalm, one of the seven **penitential psalms** known as **De Profundis**, which means "*profound sadness*."
- While the psalm-writer is unknown, he was probably a **poet** languishing in **despair** during the **Babylonian exile**, describing his location and situation.
- He calls it the "**depths**."
- Or in other words, he is in the "**pits of sadness**," which results from his and his people's poor choices.
- This is why Isaiah says, *Seek the **LORD** while he may be found; **call on him** while he is near. Let the **wicked forsake his way** and the **evil man his thoughts**. Let him turn to the **LORD**, and he will have **mercy** on him ... (Isaiah 55:6-7)*

Third Law of Holes

- We may not know the full extent of the author's duress, but we can be sure it was **considerable**.
 - It has the tone of a **person** who has **lost everything** in life.
 - It sounds like a **parent** who is suddenly bereft of a child.
 - It feels like the **anguish** of someone whose life and reputation have been **destroyed** and who now feels there is nowhere to turn.
- As **David**, who was running from **King Saul**, says in Psalm 18:6, *In my **distress**, I called to the LORD; I cried to my God for help.*
- If **David**, who killed **Goliath** of Gath, cried out to the **Lord**, so should we.

Third Law of Holes

- Have you ever stood alone at an **intersection** in the middle of nowhere and realized the **choices** facing you had been reduced to just two?
- I either **end it all** now and forever or **cry out of my despair** to God.
- One would **hope** you've never been in such a deep, profound, **dark place**, but many people have.
- This is where the psalm-writer is: in the **depths**, the **oxygen supply** is running out.
- He has no good choice except one: to "**cry out to the Lord**."
- This is also the testimony of the man of Psalm 34:6, *This **poor man called**, and the **LORD** heard him; he **saved** him from all his troubles.*



Third Law of Holes

- What's worse, he is not only in the **pit of despair** but also in a pit of his own making!
- How often has **this** happened in our lives?
- It's bad enough to be in a bad situation, but worse if it is **self-inflicted**.
- The **psalmist** readily admits the audacity and borderline hypocrisy.
- He wants **help** from the very source against whom he has **sinned**.
- *If you, O LORD, ...kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?* (v. 2).
- While he doesn't **identify** his mistakes, I imagine we might have some things in common—especially with our own poor choices, decisions, behaviors, and ill-chosen words that get us into **hot water**.

Third Law of Holes

- So what does this person do in Psalm 130? He first seeks **mercy** and **forgiveness**.
 - “**O LORD**, have mercy on me; **heal me**, for I have sinned against you.” (Psalm 41:4)
 - Have **mercy** on me, **O God**, according to your unfailing love and your great compassion, **blot out** my **transgressions**. (Psalm 51:1)
 - Do not hold against us the sins of the fathers; may your **mercy** come quickly to meet us, for we are in **desperate need**. (Psalm 79:8)
- So, the writer, in a **deep hole**, with **full knowledge** of his own culpability, obeys the **Third Law of Holes**, as should we. He asks for help.

Fourth Law of Holes

- Having **stopped** the digging and having sent up a **cry** for help, one must **wait with hope**.
- *I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope* (v. 5).
- Unfortunately, it is **incredibly hard** to **wait**.
- But if one cannot wait, one cannot hope, for one is tied to the other.
- Only those who wait upon the Lord can **hope in the Lord**.
- So how do we do it?



The “How-to’s” of Waiting

- We wait by staying in the **“now.”**
 - Going over past problems, reliving old mistakes, or getting a case of the “*shoulda, woulda, coulda*” is of **no help** whatsoever.
 - Rather, we **focus on the tasks at hand**, the next steps, and positive actions.
 - There is no way to go in a **hole** except up, and that will not happen without **waiting with a clear mind and heart**.



The “How-to’s” of Waiting

- We wait with **confidence** in the **One** on whom we have **called** for help.
 - Since we rang up **God**;
 - we must let God **answer**.
 - Since we reached out to the **Creator of the universe**.
 - We must let **God be God** and
 - do what God does on **His schedule**, not ours.



The “How-to’s” of Waiting

- We **wait** with **courage**.
 - This is the advice of the psalmist: *Wait for the LORD; Be strong and let your heart take **courage**; wait for the LORD* (27:14).
 - John Wayne reportedly said, “**Courage** is being scared to death but **saddling up anyway**.”
 - Our metaphor might work better with a **climbing** reference:
 - “**Courage** is being scared to death,
 - but **strapping on a harness**, **snapping it in place**, and having **faith** that the rope won’t break.”



The “How-to’s” of Waiting

- We **wait** with **contentment**.
 - We do not **wait** as though we’re standing in front of an **elevator door**, punching the “UP” button again and again as if it will make the **elevator** arrive faster.
 - The **elevator** will come when it comes.
 - We **learn to practice peace** and be **content** with **God’s** timing.
 - As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans, *But if we **hope** for what we do not yet have, we **wait** for it **patiently*** (Romans 8:25).



Summary

1. **The First Law of Holes** - Stop Digging! Don’t make matters worse.
2. **The Second Law of Holes** - Stop Digging **Holes** for Others! Or stop looking to blame someone else for your problems.
3. **The Third Law of Holes** - “Cry Out” to God for Help! Take responsibility and seek **God’s** forgiveness and mercy.
4. **The Fourth Law of Holes** - Wait upon the Lord!
 - a. Stay in the Now - Forget the “*shoulda, woulda, coulda*.”
 - b. Wait in Confidence - Let God be God! He is more than able!
 - c. Take Courage - God is always faithful.
 - d. Be Patient - In the meantime, practice peace and contentment.

Conclusion

- **Corrie ten Boom** once wrote:
 - “There is no **pit** so deep that **God’s love** is not deeper still.”
 - When God’s **forgiving love** reaches down to the **depths** of our souls, it lifts us up to a new place, a fresh start, and it is **then** that we realize that when we are *forgiven*, we indeed have a **future**.
- This is what the **psalmist** wanted; it’s what we all want.
- **Forgiveness** and **mercy** for a **new future**.
- All we have to do is to **humble ourselves** before the Lord, even in the **depths** of our struggles, and cry out for help, and he will set our feet on **solid ground**.

