

a needed sacrifice
(a repeat daily)

"'come now, and let us reason together,' says the Lord,
'though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as
white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they
shall be as wool.'" isa 1:18

was the death of Jesus necessary? well, i guess it
really wasn't if the Father God was content to have His
"unique creation" forever separate from Him. but He
wasn't. He had to bridge the great gulf that had
continually expanded since He created us. "and besides
all this, between us and you there is a great gulf
fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you
cannot, nor can those from there pass to us." luke
16:26

the One who created us and all things is holy.
darkness cannot exist in His light. it will always be
extinguished. we had to be born again as children of
that light to cohabit with Him.

so i ask again: was the death of Jesus necessary? to
the Father, yes! one can only look to their own life
and see if it was. in my case, there is no doubt it
was necessary. and now a little story.

the room

in that place between wakefulness and dreams, i found
myself in the room. there were no distinguishing
features save for one wall covered with small index

card files, which stretched from floor to ceiling and seemingly endlessly in either direction, had very different headings.

as i drew near the wall of files, the first to catch my attention was one that read "people i have liked." i opened it and began flipping cards. i quickly shut it, shocked to realize that i recognized the names written on each one.

and then without being told, i knew exactly where i was. this lifeless room with its small files was a crude catalog system for my life. here were written the actions of every moment, big and small, in a detail my memory couldn't match.

a sense of wonder and curiosity, coupled with horror, stirred within me as i began randomly opening files and exploring their content. some brought joy and sweet memories; others a sense of shame and regret so intense that i would look over my shoulder to see if anyone was watching. a file named "Friends" was next to one marked "friends i have betrayed."

the titles ranged from the mundane to the outright weird. "books i have read," "lies i have told," "comfort i have given," "jokes i have laughed at." some were almost hilarious in their exactness: "things i've yelled at my brothers." others i couldn't laugh at: "things i have done in my anger," "things i have muttered under my breath at my parents." i never ceased to be surprised by the contents. often there were many more cards than i expected. sometimes fewer than i hoped.

i was overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the life i had lived. could it be possible that i had the time in my short life to write each of these thousands or even millions of cards? but each card confirmed this truth. each was written in my own handwriting. each signed with my own signature.

when i came to a file marked "lustful thoughts," i felt a chill run through my body. i pulled the file out only an inch, not willing to test its size, and drew out a card. i shuddered at its detailed content. i felt sick to think that such a moment had been recorded.

an almost animal rage broke on me. one thought dominated my mind: no one must ever see these cards! no one must ever see this room! i have to destroy them! in an insane frenzy, i yanked the file out. its size didn't matter now. i had to empty it and burn the cards.

but as i took it at one end and began pounding it on the floor, i could not dislodge a single card. i became desperate and pulled out a card, only to find it as strong as steel when i tried to tear it.

defeated and utterly helpless, i returned the file to its slot. leaning my forehead against the wall, i let out a long, self-pitying sigh. and then i saw it. the title bore "people i have shared the gospel with." the handle was brighter than those around it, newer, almost unused. i pulled on its handle and a small box not more than 3 inches long fell into my hands. i could count the cards it contained on one hand.

and then the tears came. i began to weep. sobs so deep that the hurt started in my stomach and shook through me. i fell on my knees and cried. i cried out of shame, from the overwhelming shame of it all. the rows of file shelves swirled in my tear-filled eyes. no one must ever, ever know of this room. i must lock it up and hide the key.

but then as i pushed away the tears, i saw Him. no, please not Him. not here. oh, anyone but Jesus. i watched helplessly as He began to open the files and read the cards. i couldn't bear to watch His response. and in the moments i could bring myself to look at His face, i saw a sorrow deeper than my own. He seemed to intuitively go to the worst boxes. why did He have to read every one?

finally He turned and looked at me from across the room. He looked at me with pity in His eyes. but this was a pity that didn't anger me. i dropped my head, covered my face with my hands and began to cry again. He walked over and put His arm around me. He could have said so many things. but He didn't say a word. He just cried with me.

then He got up and walked back to the wall of files. starting at one end of the room, He took out a file and, one by one, began to sign His name over mine on each card.

"no!" i shouted rushing to Him. all i could find to say was "no, no," as i pulled the card from Him. His name shouldn't be on these cards. but there it was,

written in red so rich, so dark, so alive. the name of Jesus covered mine. it was written with His blood.

He gently took the card back. He smiled a sad smile and began to sign the cards. i don't think i'll ever understand how He did it so quickly, but the next instant it seemed i heard Him close the last file and walk back to my side. He placed His hand on my shoulder and said, "it is finished."

i stood up, and He led me out of the room. there was no lock on its door. there were still cards to be written.

- by joshua harris

do you think your life needed sch a sacrifice? yes, there are cards remaining to be written. i wonder what they will say and if they too will need a covering? try though we may we will always fall short of the glory of God. i would venture to say we will always need a covering.