

"Understanding Sin"

Scripture: Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Introduction:

Today, I have this piece of plywood on this easel, and have attached this paper target with a red bulls eye in the middle of it. I have asked some of the junior high boys to come up front and take darts and try to hit the bulls eye.

When all was said and done no-one had hit the bulls eye. I asked them what went wrong. They said that they were nervous and hadn't thrown darts in a while. I also asked them how they felt about missing. To which they replied that they would have rather hit the bulls eye and needed another chance.

Transitional Statement:

Church, our relationship with God should be the most important thing in our lives. Today I hope to remind us that a correct view of sin will help our relationship with God to grow like a tree planted beside the waters, while a lack understanding will dry up and wither the potential that the Father has placed before us.

Lesson:

I. First let's begin with a definition of Sin

- A. In Genesis 39 we read about Joseph running Potiphar's in Egypt. Things went really good for a while until Potiphar's wife decides to make a play for Joseph. Do you remember how Joseph responded? He says "...how then could I do this great evil and sin against God?"
- B. Directly speaking sin is the violation of God's law. That which runs counter to His will. Biblical words to describe sin are transgression, perversion, evil, impiety, unrighteousness, lawlessness, depravity and rebellion. Church sin is more than an bad decision, it is more than an annoying habit, it's more than an ops! Sin is rebellion against God's law, which is the standard of righteousness Psalms 119:160.

II. Then, God hasn't left us in the dark concerning His will.

- A. In the garden of Eden God told Adam what to do and what not to do. He also instructed Abraham, Noah, The Nation of Israel, and us today, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance 2 Peter 3:9
- B. And God certainly hasn't given us a partial message that somehow needs further explanation. Hebrews 2:3
- C. And, 2 Peter 1:3 tells us that God has given us all we need pertaining to life and godliness.

- D. Plainly stated, God hasn't left anyone to guess or speculate about what He expects.

III. So, there is no excuse for Sin

A. Perhaps a human tendency is to try to excuse our shortcomings.

B. Have you ever said or been tempted to say:

1. I am just doing the best that I can.
2. No matter what I do I just can seem to get it right.
3. Or, I can't seem to quite

C. God hasn't ever excepted excuses.

1. Remember all the excuses Moses offered for not wanting to return to Egypt Gen. chapters 3 & 4

-Who am I that I should go? 3:11
-I don't even know your name 3:13
-What if they won't believe or listen to me? 4:1
-Not eloquent of speech 4:10

2. God did not except them !

D. In John 15:22 Jesus says of His disciples:

"If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin."

E. And Paul including the Gentiles says in Romans 1:20

"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."

F. **Moses' excuses angered God. Gen 4:14**

IV. Now to where the rubber meets the road, Church, Sin is a choice

A. Sin is something that we can help!

B. It involves satisfying our will

-Unlike Jesus, sin says "Father not your will, but mine be done"

C. And at the root of this choice is selfishness.

1. James 1:14 *"But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust."*

2. This choice comes from a heart set on its desires

-After all, Eve took the fruit because it was pleasing to the eye and she was considering what she would get out of it Gen. 3:6.

D. You see, sin is a choice to operate independently of God.

E. And it's a choice to submit to another master.....it's a sellout!

F. **We are not helpless victims in regard to sin....but willing participants**

V. And to the darkest fact of all....Sin separates us from God.

A. After Adam and Eve choose to sin God evicted them from His presence

Genesis 3:24 "So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life."

B. And Isaiah puts it very clearly to Israel saying:

Isaiah 59:1-2 "Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; nor is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear."

C. And to us under the New Covenant, the Hebrew writer says in 10:26 "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,"

D. And as a separation, Sin is linked with death Ezekiel 18:4

E. **i.e. God is Holy and Righteous, and He won't put up with Sin 1 John 1:5**

VI. Now let's look at the view of sin under the Old Testament Law.

A. The OT Law was given in the form of 10 commands with some 613 other supporting statutes and ordinances.

B. The OT Law was given as a legal system

1. Perfect observance required

James 2:9-10 "*But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. 10 For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all.*"

2. Violators never get a warning. They are condemned at the first infraction.
3. Hence it was called the Law of Sin and Death Romans 8:2, because no-one is sinless 1 John 1:10.

C. So a legal system as a means of salvation is futile.

1. It is an endless hope for anyone trying to be saved by it.
2. The OT Law was put in place by God to:

- Teach His people the basics about having a relationship with Him
- Show them that they couldn't save themselves
- Expose how utterly sinful, sin really is Romans 7:13
- Direct them and us to a system of grace and mercy under Christ.

D. Let me draw your mind to some warped thinking that evolved under OT Law.

1. Justification comes through perfect observance of the Law.

- This led to the idea that they could somehow save themselves
- Made the Talmud, a collection of Jewish laws and traditions to help them perfectly observe the Law.

- Don't eat, drink, taste or touch thinking of Col 2:21-11
- They taught their own ideas as doctrine. Matt 15:8-9

- The NT tells us that justification comes through faith not the Law Romans 3:28; Gal. 2:16

2. Another warped thought was where godly approval could come from.

- So they did their acts of righteousness to be seen by men
Matt 23:5
- They somehow thought righteousness was linked to ancestry.

3. With this thinking came the tendency to view the Law as a To-Do / Checklist system.

- And left their focus on the commands not on the sacrifice.

E. **This distorted view of the Law, created in them the idea that relationship with God centers around obligation and duty.**

VII. But, then Jesus came to earth.

A. God sent his son as a perfect atonement for sin Romans 3:25

1. To break down the barrier of separation
2. To reconcile us unto Himself (Ephesians 2:16)
3. With a sacrifice made once and for all (Hebrews 7:27)
4. Offering for the first time the idea of continual cleansing (1 John 1:7)

B. Then in regard to the perfect sacrifice of Christ, God didn't give a bunch of laws, rules and regulations....instead He instructed us about grace, which is unmerited favor with Him.

1. And He called this system the Law of Liberty (James 1:25)

-Seemingly a contradiction in terms as law doesn't provide liberty

2. But here the idea draws us away from legal obligation

-Where the participants act from the desires created by faith

....Romans 14:23

-Here under Christ grace takes the place of regulation

C. So when God uses the Greek word "Harmartia" to talk about sin in the NT, He has picked a word that signifies missing the mark, much like our dart throwers have done today. He is not assigning new meaning to the word sin, but He is trying to give us direction on how we view sin.

-He basically telling us that sin shouldn't be some legalistic statistic that when tabulated will determine our entrance into heaven, but it is that which will destroy potential that God has placed within us and inevitably stifle our relationship with Him.

D. **And God holds out His words as a To-Be listnot a To-Do List,**

VIII. God expects us to be transformed

A. God wants our minds to be transformed

Romans 12:1-2 *"Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."*

B. Transformation happens in the heart by yielding to God's desires given through His word.

C. Not our will be done....but God's will be done !

D. **Crucified with Christ and devoted from the heart to God.**

Conclusion:

- Church, sin is a contradiction to God's Holiness and the mere thought of it should break our hearts.
- If our relationship with God is to grow, we must aim at His target with all the devotion and desire of our hearts.
- In closing let us consider the prayer of King David as he reflects on his sin with Bathsheba.

Psalms 51

I A Contrite Sinner's Prayer for Pardon.

For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your loving-kindness;

According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity

And cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I know my transgressions,

And my sin is ever before me.

4 Against You, You only, I have sinned

And done what is evil in Your sight,

So that You are justified when You speak

And blameless when You judge.

5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,

And in sin my mother conceived me.

6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being,

And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.

7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness,

Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.

9 Hide Your face from my sins

And blot out all my iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,

And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

11 Do not cast me away from Your presence

And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation

And sustain me with a willing spirit.

13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,

And sinners will be converted to You.

14 Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, the God of my salvation;

Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.

15 O Lord, open my lips,

That my mouth may declare Your praise.

16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it;

You are not pleased with burnt offering.

17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;

A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

18 By Your favor do good to Zion;

Build the walls of Jerusalem.

19 Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices,

In burnt offering and whole burnt offering;

Then young bulls will be offered on Your altar