

Applying Scripture to Life

Topic 2 – Sin and Salvation

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Review / Introduction

The purpose of this series is to equip each of us so that through the sufficiency of Christ and the Scriptures we can mature and grow in our ability to apply the Scriptures to our own difficult life issues and sin. The additional purpose of this series to equip us to bring biblical care to our brethren when the inevitable opportunities to extend ourselves in love are presented. We saw that unequivocally, every Spirit-filled believer is capable and commanded to disciple one another.

Why is it important to understand sin fully and be able to recognize it in ourselves? First, a correct understanding of a person's condition is important. A defective understanding of a disease will lead to a defective understanding of the cure. But also, sin results in broken relationships, first and foremost with God. Sin is the cause of all relationship problems between people. Sin is and results in bad responses to circumstances. Sin causes inner and outer turmoil and pain in people's lives. And finally, the sin problem is something that we cannot solve on our own. The solution must come from outside ourselves.

Today we look at the horribleness of sin and its remedy.

Sin's Definition

The origin of sin appears to be with Satan (Isa 14:12-15; Ezek 28:11-19) but originated with people in Eden (Gen 3).

“Sin” is literally missing the mark or falling short of a standard. Sin is...

- anything contrary to the character of God
 - ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Rom 3:23)
- either by commission or omission transgressing God's word
 - ¹⁵But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. (Rom 5:15)
- lawlessness or rebellion or willful rejection or flagrant opposition of God's moral will
 - ⁴Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. (1 John 3:4)
- missing the mark of perfect righteousness; any departure from God's perfect standard in thought, word, or deed
 - ⁴⁸Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matt 5:48)

- ungodliness or living with little or no thought of God, His will, His glory, or dependence on Him since the purpose of our creation is to live and move and exist in Him (Bridges).

²⁸for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' (Acts 17:28 and before and after)

Sin can also be viewed as a disposition of the heart that 1) thinks evil; 2) speaks evil; 3) acts evil; and 4) omits good (from MacArthur).

Disposition of the heart

⁹"The **heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick**; Who can understand it? (Jer 17:9)

³This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, **the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives**. Afterwards they *go* to the dead. (Ecc 9:3)

²⁰And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. ²¹"For from within, out **of the heart of men, proceed** the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, ²²deeds of coveting *and* wickedness, *as well as* deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride *and* foolishness. ²³"All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man." (Mark 7:20-23)

1) thinks evil

⁵Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that **every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**. (Gen 6:5)

2) speaks evil

⁶And **the tongue is a fire, the very world of iniquity**; the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body, and sets on fire the course of our life, and is set on fire by hell. (James 3:6)

3) acts evil

²⁴**Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, ...** ²⁶For this reason **God gave them over to degrading passions; ...** ²⁸And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, **God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper**, ²⁹being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips, ³⁰slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, ³¹without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful; ³²and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. (Rom 1:18-32)

4) and omits good

²⁰Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who *continually* does good and who never sins. (Ecc 7:20)

Sin is even worse than above. Sins of thought, word, or deed flow from the sin nature. Every person is born with a sin nature (original sin) that is inherited from Adam (Romans 5:12). It is the corruption of the whole nature and that which inclines and enslaves to sin.

¹²Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned— (Rom 5:12)

³³Jesus answered them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. (John 8:33)

¹⁶Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? ¹⁷But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. (Rom 6:16-18)

The result of the sin nature is “total depravity”, where the corruption of sin extends to every aspect of one’s being (Rom 1:18-3:20) including intellect (2 Cor 4:4), conscience (1 Tim 4:2), will (Rom 1:28), and heart (Eph 4:18). The idea of total depravity is not that people display as much evil as they possibly could, nor that they cannot do any good, or even feign a love for God, but that their entire nature is affected by sin.

The result of sin is that all people are lost, separated from God, totally incapable of moving toward Him on their own; without hope in this life and destined for hell in the next.

¹And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ²in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (Eph 2:1-3)

So, all people are sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Psa 14:1-3; Jer 17:9; Rom 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

❖ How awful do you regard sin?

Salvation from Sin

The state of all people is that they are “dead in their trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1-3); have their minds blinded by and are held captive by Satan (2 Cor 4:4; 2 Tim 2:25-26); love the darkness and hate the light (John 3:19-20); are a slave to sin (John 8:33); and are “foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending their life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another” (Titus 3:3).

Good works, heredity, or religious ritual do not save from penalty and power of sin. They do not release you from enslavement to sin, they do not make you alive, they do not change you. That only comes through Christ.

God did not send Christ into the world to meet your felt needs, give you your “best life now”, make you healthy and wealthy, fix your broken emotional state, fix your self-image/esteem, or bring social justice. Every person’s greatest need is freedom from the penalty and power of SIN.

❖ **In your mind, what is your greatest need?**

The gospel is the good news of God’s grace to sinful mankind. It is God’s omnipotent, supernatural, unilateral intervention in the most hopeless and helpless situations with actions that only He can perform and with the results that only He can produce, all for His glory. It is the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1:16). The gospel presents salvation from sin by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

Namely, all people, everyone, have willfully rebelled against their Creator and are therefore guilty of eternal death. But He loved you so much that He sent His Son to pay the penalty for your sins, to die the death that you deserve. He offers salvation from sin to all who exercise true saving faith. Upon exercising true saving faith, you enter into a personal relationship with your Creator, you are born again (made new), the debt of sin is forgiven, and the power of sin over you is broken.

Paul says something important in Galatians.

^{9a}But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, (Gal 4:9)

Paul gives two perspectives of our salvation. We have come to experience (know) God, that is true. But the grander view, the more glorious view, is that the Creator of the universe just does not know about me, but is in an intimate, personal relationship with me through His Son (I have come to be *known* by God). When I was a dead slave, without hope and without God in the world, and excluded from the life of God, Christ Jesus intervened in my hopelessness and helplessness to save me, a sinner, to be His worshiper.

We mention “true saving faith”. The Scriptures are clear that faith (noun) or to believe (verb) is the means by which salvation is appropriated.

¹⁶“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him** shall not perish, but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

⁴⁰“For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and **believes in Him** will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day.” (John 6:40)

⁴⁷“Truly, truly, I say to you, he **who believes has eternal life**. (John 6:47)

But we know for sure that faith that saves is more than acknowledging the truth of Jesus' prophesied coming, virgin birth, sinless life, divinity, work on the cross, resurrection, and future return. You can believe all those things and still not be saved from your sin, for even the demons believe those things.

¹⁹You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. (James 2:19)

²⁸When He came to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs. *They were* so extremely violent that no one could pass by that way. ²⁹And they cried out, saying, "What business do we have with each other, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" (Matt 8:28-29)

²³Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, ²⁴saying, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!" (Mark 1:23-24)

So, what is "true saving faith"? Saving faith is not mere intellectual assent to facts concerning biblical truth, the gospel, or the person and work of Christ. True saving faith involves repentance (Heb 6:1), following Jesus (John 10:27-28), self-denial (Luke 9:23-26), forsaking all (Luke 14:25-33), confessing Jesus as Lord (Rom 10:8-10), and a heart attitude to obey Jesus (John 3:36).

Those that have been made new in Christ (2 Cor 5:17) are such because they have true saving faith which is a living faith; a faith that works; a faith that demonstrates itself true; a faith that is progressing in sanctification (James 2:14-26).

❖ **How accurate is your view of true saving faith?**

Results of Salvation

At the moment of salvation, when saving faith is exercised, God does a list of supernatural works in the repentant sinner. He redeems, regenerates, converts, justifies, adopts, spiritually baptizes, indwells with the Holy Spirit, seals, bestows spiritual gifts, and sanctifies.

The true believer has been changed (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 2:20) and will therefore bring about fruits in their life in keeping with repentance (1 Pet 1:8-9; John 14:14, 23; 1 John 2:3-6). This is a forever-change and one that has practical implications for your life. God's work continues throughout the life of a true believer.

⁶For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 1:6)

I recommend studying all these works of God at salvation as they are encouraging and challenging. Various studies can be found on the VBC Adult Education page. For brevity today, we will look at two.

Spiritual Baptism (Union with Christ)

Spiritual baptism is God's act where the believer is united with Christ in His death (Rom 6:3-5; Gal 3:27-28) and into union with other believers in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13).

³Or do you not know that **all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?** ⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have become united with *Him* in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, (Rom 6:3-5)

²⁷For **all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.** ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; **for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** (Gal 3:27-28)

¹³For **by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Cor 12:13)

Romans 6 describes spiritual baptism in detail. The believer's union with Christ in His death and resurrection is the basis of deliverance from sin and how that union affects our progressive sanctification. The believer is "freed from sin and enslaved to God." We have changed masters. We were slaves to sin, now we are slaves to God. We must now present ourselves to God as those alive from the dead and our bodies as instruments of righteousness to God.

- Walk in newness of life (v4)
- Old self was crucified (v5)
- No longer slaves to sin; freed from sin (v6-7)
- Can consider ourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus (v11)
- Therefore, we are free to choose righteousness (v12-23)

The practical implication for life is that you are freed from the power of sin. Sin and righteousness are now choices.

❖ **What is the pattern in your life; do you choose sin or righteousness?**

Holy Spirit Indwelling

Indwelling is God the Holy Spirit's act by which He permanently (John 14:16) takes up residence in the believer (1 Cor 6:19; Eph 1:13-14).

¹⁶I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, **that He may be with you forever;** (John 14:16)

¹⁹Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God,** and that you are not your own? (1 Cor 6:19)

¹³In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,** ¹⁴**who is given as a pledge of our inheritance,** with a view to the redemption of *God's own* possession, to the praise of His glory. (Eph 1:13-14)

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is an amazing spiritual blessing. When you exercise true saving faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit permanently indwells you. He functions as your helper, teaching and guiding you in our spiritual growth toward Christ-likeness. What a comfort and encouragement this is for the one in Christ.

The practical implication for life is that the indwelling Holy Spirit provides the power to wage war with the flesh.

¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (Galatians 5:16-17)

❖ **Are you consistently walking in the Spirit?**

The Believer and Sin

At salvation we are born again (John 3:3-8), the power of the sinful nature over us is broken (Rom 6:15-23), and a new nature is imparted (2 Pet 1:4).

But the sinful flesh is not eradicated at salvation. The flesh and the new nature are now opposed to one another and are at war. We battle the flesh so that we are not carried away and enticed by our own lust (James 1:14) as we are bombarded with and tempted by the lies of Satan that he presents in his world system.

The result of sin in the believer's life is loss of connection to God (Gen 3:8; Psa 66:18; Eph 4:30) and the Lord's discipline (Heb 12:6) and sometimes even physical death (1 Cor 11:30). Persistent sin results in church discipline (Matt 18:15-20; 1 Cor 5:4-5).

Yet, God provides all the resources needed to walk in a way that glorifies Himself.

²Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; ³seeing that **His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness,** through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. ⁴For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (2 Pet 1:2-4)

¹³No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, **who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able,** but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it. (1 Cor 10:13)

In the battle against sin, you have the Scriptures:

¹⁶All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; ¹⁷so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (2 Tim 3:16-17)

⁹How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping *it* according to Your word.

¹⁰With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments.

¹¹Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You. (Psa 119:9-16)

¹⁷Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth. (John 17:17)

...the intercession of Christ:

¹My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; (1 John 2:1)

²⁵Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (Heb 7:25)

...and the indwelling Holy Spirit:

¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. ¹⁷For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. (Gal 5:16-17)

❖ Are you availing yourself of those resources?

The remedy for sin when it occurs in the believer's life is confession (think the same as God about your sin) and repentance (turning from sin in contrition) (Josh 7:19-20; Psa 32:1-5; Heb 6:1; 2 Cor 7:10-11; Rev 2:4-5, 16; 3:2, 19).

¹How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!

²How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity,
And in whose spirit there is no deceit!

³When I kept silent *about my sin*, my body wasted away
Through my groaning all day long.

⁴For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
My vitality was drained away *as* with the fever heat of summer. *Selah.*

⁵I **acknowledged** my sin to You,
And my iniquity I **did not hide**;
I said, "I will **confess my transgressions to the Lord**"
And You forgave the guilt of my sin. *Selah.* (Psalm 32:1-5)

¹⁹Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I implore you, give glory to the Lord, the God of Israel, and give praise to Him; and tell me now what you have done. Do not hide it from me." ²⁰So Achan answered Joshua and said, "Truly, I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel, and this is what I did: (Joshua 7:19-20)

❖ Are you quick to confess and repent?

Summary

You have been freed from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and one day in heaven you will be freed from the very presence of sin by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Yet now our labor is to battle the flesh and remain in constant fellowship with Christ with the resources God has given us. Should we sin, confession to God and repentance are our remedies.

❖ **Are you laboring or coasting?**

Additional Study

1. Read and pray Psalm 26:2 and 139:22-23. Ask God to show you sin from which you need to repent and confess.
2. Do you have any sin from which you have been unwilling to repent? If so, read Hebrews 12:5-9 and 2 Corinthians 13:5 and consider the implications of your unwillingness to repent of this/these sin(s).
3. Read Psalm 51
When you sin, who is it against? How should that affect how you deal with your sin?
How can you bless others after having dealt with sin in your own life?
What kind of sacrifice does God desire? Does that describe you?
4. Read Hebrews 9:27-28; 1 Thessalonias 1:8-9; Nahum 1:2-3; John 3:36; Ephesians 2:4-5; and Romans 5:8
What is the state of all people without Christ?
How does God show His love?
Who do I love?
Is my love demonstrated in my time and words (the gospel)?
5. Read Luke 9:23-26
Have you bowed to Jesus' Lordship in every area of your life?
Make a list of those areas of struggle that need to be submitted to Christ's Lordship.
How does repentance apply here?
6. Read Luke 14:15-33
Are there things in your life that you elevate to be more important than Jesus?
Are there things in your life that you do not give up?
7. Read John 14:15-24
What does obedience to Jesus demonstrate?
Do you love Jesus?