

THE WASTE OF SIN

"He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity: and the rod of his anger shall fail."
Proverbs 22:8

There are one hundred nineteen words in the Old Testament, in the Hebrew language, which tell us what sin is and what it does to man. The large majority of these words directly express the wastefulness of sin. Some of these one hundred nineteen words are translated as follows: "To wither, to fade, to turn, to twist, to pervert, to be guilty of a breach of trust, to be soiled or polluted, to be loathsome, hateful or offensive, to entrap, to trip up, to be vain, to be empty as breath; hence, to toil and get nothing." This last expression is the one found in our text. Literally, "He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity, emptiness, or nothing." What the Bible here says is that those who live in sin "toil and get nothing." Man must see himself in the hands of Satan toiling feverishly and getting nothing. He wastes his life for Satan and gets no reward from him in return.

I. The Waste of Sin Is Seen All About Us.

One does not have to be a mystic seer or even a thorough student of the Bible to see the devastation of sin all about us in the world today.

1. Sin is rampant in the world.

It is like a mighty tornado that sweeps the land, leaving wreckage and wreaking havoc in its wake. As the lamented Henry W. Grady once said of the liquor traffic, so may we say today of sin, "There is not a cottage in the land humble enough to escape it and not a palace strong enough to shut it out." The reality and actuality of sin in this world cannot be denied, in the light of the results it brings upon mankind.

2. Sin is wasteful in the lives of Christians.

- (1) Sin is wasteful to the happiness of a Christian. A child of God who lets sin come into his life will destroy his happiness. The cry of David in the long ago is the heart cry today of many people who have wandered off into sin. In his hour of repentance he cried, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." Psalm 51:12. David was not asking that salvation be restored to him, for he had not lost that, but he had lost the Joy of it. Many children of God have let the waste of sin come into their lives and destroy their happiness.
- (2) Sin is wasteful to the talents of a Christian. God gives His children varying abilities that are to be used for His glory. If these are abused and given to the cause of Satan, God will see to it that these talents are taken away. How pitiful it is to see persons with marvelous abilities, unusual powers of speech, personality and influence, be using these in the service of Satan. Multitudes are throwing their talents to the winds and wasting them in sin. What a tragedy! Every possibility of achieving the worthwhile in life is wasted by sin. Instead of reaping a golden harvest of success in life, a person who sows to iniquity will reap emptiness.
- (3) Sin is wasteful to the usefulness of a Christian. Here we see one who was useful in God's service once, perhaps a leader in the old church back home. This person could be counted upon in every time of need. Then the usefulness of that person was lost. His power has also been lost. Do you feel that you are living your best for God? Do you feel that your life is worthwhile? It may be that sin has come into your life and taken away your power. There was a time perhaps when you could pray and get an answer. You could speak to lost souls and win them to Christ, but not so now. Your power and your usefulness are gone. Have you let sin waste your power and usefulness?

3. The wastes of sin in the world today are pathetic and heart-rending. All about are broken homes, filled prisons, drunken debauches, and persons diseased in body and mind. The pall of sin has settled with Stygian blackness all over the land. By whatever title men wish to call war, anguish, heartache, or sorrow, it is still sin that makes the world suffer as it does. And the waste of it is both pathetic and heart-rending.
4. The waste of sin does not confine itself to the person alone who practices it. The waste reached beyond this person. This is to be seen in the enormous crime bill that society must pay annually. In the United States it is more than fifteen billion dollars per year. When we think of the larger figures for liquor, accidents, treatment for people diseased physically and mentally, sin, war, etc., we can begin to see how wasteful sin is. One's nearest relatives and dearest friends also suffer anguish and tears because of sin. Many hearts are broken and multitudes are brought down to premature graves because of the sins of others, as in the case of women with wayward sons, prodigal daughters, or drunken husbands. They ought not to look as they do nor to die as soon as they will. It is not right to make them suffer. Perhaps some of you are away from home and are not living as your mother taught you to live. If you refuse to think of your own welfare, think of them. Your sins will waste their lives.

II. The Waste of Sin Is Complete.

1. Sin weighs down, handicaps the sinner and wastes his energies. "Let us lay aside every weight and sin which doth so easily beset us." Sin in a man's life is as though he had a terrible weight placed upon him which held him down and kept him from making any progress in the race of life.
2. Sin bites like a fiery serpent. Its deadly venom is shot into man's entire being, and one eventually wastes away like the men with a dread and pernicious disease. That sin does waste man's mentality is clearly shown by the case of the poor fellow whom Jesus met in Gerda. He was insane. He was running from the tombs and cutting himself. When Jesus saved him, he then sat clothed and in his right mind. When the prodigal son was away in the strange country of sin and shame, he was not at himself for the Bible says that "When he came to himself" he was contrite and returned to his father.
3. Sin makes man a slave. His will is enslaved. Many persons who live such terrible lives of profligacy and shame are more to be pitied than scorned. Satan has them in his power and under his spell, and they have no will of their own. Poor old Samson lost his strength one day; then the Philistines gouged out his eyes, bound him to the mill at Gaza and made him grind all day long. In that pitiable plight he is the true picture of man under the power and bondage of sin.

Another outstanding example of the fact that sin makes man a slave is the prodigal son. Of him Luke 15:13 says "And there wasted his substance with riotous living."

- (1) He wasted his substance. He wasted the part of the estate which his father had saved and given to him. The part represented toil and sacrifice. Did he have a right to do as he pleased with it. Legally, yes. Morally, no. No man has a right to spend his money for that which brings shame and ruin to himself or to others. Wasting one's substance is a sin within itself. One must meet his own record at the bar of eternal justice.
- (2) He wasted his talents. He cast aside as refuse all the power and ability which he had to make the world better. He lived beneath his privileges. This

is a common tragedy in life. Must one give account for what he could have been and would not? Or what he could have done and wilfully refused to do? Yes. Our abilities, skills, knowledge, training and advantages in life bind us with unbreakable cords to the world's needs. We owe it to God, to the world, and to ourselves to fill the place where we can do the greatest good and reach the most people.

- (3) He wasted his time. This is even worse than wasting his substance and his talents. Time is the opportunity in which to do things. Every hour is big with destinies.

How did the prodigal waste that thing?

- (1) By non-use.
- (2) By misuse. Wrong use is decidedly the worse of the two. He spent his substance, his talents, and his time for naught. He went out to have a good time, but it was not the time that he had hoped to have. Instead of friends and flowers and music, he found bitterness and hatred. Instead of joy and peace and usefulness, he found disappointment, heartache, and remorse.

Such a waste of life is a tragedy. Sin is a waster. How desolate it leaves life, and character, and the soul!

III. Jesus Christ Is The Restorer of The Wastes.

1. He alone can repair the damage in a life that has been wasted by sin. Where all others have failed, He steps in to repair the wasted life. Once while on a mission of mercy He was stopped by a poor woman who had an issue of blood. For twelve years she had had it, and at length she had spent all that she had on patent medicine and quack doctors, but to no avail. She touched the hem of Christ's garment and was healed at once. Listener, have you tried vain philosophies, fake cures, and pretentious religions in an effort to restore the wastewrought by sin? If so, turn from them for they give no relief. Only Christ and His cure will do. Only He can repair the waste of sin.
2. When sin has wreaked its havoc in a life, when all hope is gone, and you give up in despair, turn by repentance and faith to Christ and He will give you hope. Look at the waste sin has brought already into your life; look at the waste it has brought to others whom you know. Realize that our text is true that, "He that soweth iniquity shall reap emptiness."

"I've tried in vain a thousand ways
My fears to quell, my hopes to raise,
But all I need the Bible says, Is Jesus.

My soul is night, my heart is steel,
I cannot see, I cannot feel,
For light, for life, I must appeal, To Jesus.

Though some will mock, and some will blame,
In spite of fear, in spite of shame,
I'll go to Him because His name -- Is Jesus.

He died, He lives, He reigns, He pleads,
There's love in all His words, and deeds,
And all, yes, all a sinner needs -- Is Jesus."