

SIN, EARTH'S GREATEST BLOT

"And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin" Exodus 34:6-7.

Next to the doctrine of God comes the doctrine of man. Then, close upon our knowledge of God and man comes the study of that which separates them, sin. Any discussion in which man's relationship to God is considered is incomplete unless it takes into account the fact of sin.

At the outset we shall notice a few definitions of sin:

1. Sin Is a Breach of Relations Between Man and God.

It is the departure of the sinner from God's will.

2. Sin Is a Rebellion Against the Will of God.

Sin is the result of choice, a choice contrary to the mind and will of God. Having the power of choice, man is free to obey God or to disobey Him. Man's personal opposition to the will of God is sin. Sin is any thought, desire, word, or deed contrary to the will of God. Rebellion against the will of God usually manifests itself in a determination to have one's own way regardless of consequences.

3. Sin Is a Transgression of the Law of God.

"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" I John 3:4. Transgression means to go across. For example, you see a traffic light which is shining red, and you go across the street just the same. You have transgressed the law—you have broken the law. God's law shows man what is right and what is wrong. When we go across it, we have sinned. When one goes across the line which marks the boundary between right and wrong, whether unintentionally or deliberately, he has sinned. The law of God demands a perfect obedience, but none can yield such obedience. Hence, the curse of a broken law rests upon all of those who break it.

4. Sin Is a Missing of the Mark.

God's law requires perfection, and anything short of that is sin. Any failure to reach the divine ideal, or to measure up to the divine standard, is sin. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Sin causes one to come short of the correct way of life. Any claim, therefore, to sinlessness by any person living in the flesh, is wholly presumptuous, for as long as one is unable to reach completely the standard of perfection as exemplified by Christ, he is missing the mark and is guilty of sin.

5. Sin Is a Failure To Live Up To the Light We Have.

"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" James 4:17. To leave undone what we know we should do, is to sin. There are some people who know that they should confess Christ as Saviour, that they should follow Him in baptism, that they should be active church members, that they should tithe, etc., however, they have refused to do any of these things. In so doing they sin against the Lord.

6. Sin Is a Lack of Faith in God.

"For whatsoever is not of faith is sin" Romans 14:23.

7. Sin Is a Wrong Treatment of Others.

(1) Pride

"An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin" Proverbs 21:4.

(2) Favoritism.

"But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors" James 2:9.

(3) Ill Treatment

"He that despiseth his neighbour sinneth: but he that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he" Proverbs 14:21.

According to Dr. A. B. Davidson, in the sphere of religion, sin is idolatry; in the sphere of speech, sin is falsehood; in the sphere of civil life, sin is injustice; and in the sphere of the mind, sin is guile or lack of sincerity.

I. The Reality of Sin.

There is something terribly wrong with this world in which we live. Friends tell us the stories of black deeds which they have committed or witnessed. We read about evil deeds in every newspaper, and we hear about them on every radio news broadcast. We look around us and see wickedness rampant on every side. Certainly there is something wrong with the world, and this trouble is not on the surface, but it is deep-seated and internal. One must be blind indeed if he cannot see that something in human nature is out of joint, out of line with the good, and out of harmony with God.

There are four things that prove to us beyond a peradventure of a doubt that sin is a sad and terrible reality:

1. Experience.

Isaiah said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" Isaiah 6:5. Men know themselves to be sinners. Every man knows that he has come short of perfection. He is guilty of sins of commission when he violates God's law, and he is guilty of sins of omission when he fails to do what God has commanded.

2. Observation.

As we look about us, we recognize that none are perfect; even the best of our acquaintances have some faults. Some are not as sinful as others, but none are perfect. Blind indeed are the eyes which do not see the blighting and blasting and brutalizing power of sin in human life.

3. History.

As we look over the record of man's achievements in this world, one prominent characteristic always meets us. The highest achievements, the noblest deeds, and the most glorious and enduring triumphs are stained with human sin.

4. Scripture.

God's Word emphasizes the fact of man's sinfulness. Experience teaches, observation discloses, history and the Scriptures declare the fact of sin. It is foolish to deny, to ignore, or to evade the fact that sin is a reality. We know too much about sin to deny it; we have watched its results too often to ignore it; and we are too human to evade it.

II. The Range of Sin.

God's Word plainly teaches that sin is universal in its range. All people of every race are sinners. This is one of the clearest teachings of the Bible. The range of sin is not only universal, but universally personal. "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" Romans 3:23. There is not an exception. The verdict of the Holy Spirit is that "there is no man that sinneth not" I Kings 8:46. "Surely there is not a righteous man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not" Ecclesiastes 7:20. "If we say that we do not have sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" I John 1:8. Not merely are we mistaken, but "We lead ourselves astray". We do for ourselves what Satan tries to do for us. We know that the assertion which we make is false, but we try to persuade ourselves that it is true. We delude ourselves; but, we do not deceive others who know us.

III. The Results of Sin.

1. Alienation From God.

It is of the very nature of sin to alienate men from God. It cuts off man from God, "From whom all blessings flow". After Adam disobeyed God, in his shame, he hid himself from God. "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, "Where art thou?" Genesis 3:8-9. Sin is the great separator. There must be separation from sin or there will be a distance between the sinner and God.

2. Depravity.

The depravity of man's nature is inherent and universal. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" Psalm 51:5. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Jeremiah 17:9. All of the parts of man's nature have been affected by sin. Sin taints the affections, warps the intelligence, and perverts the will. Man is totally depraved in the sense that he has the inherent tendency toward evil, that his whole nature has been weakened by sin, that he is totally unable to deliver himself from the power of sin, and without the redeeming power of God's grace, he will sink deeper into sin.

3. Degradation.

Sin is a brand on the memory, a burden on the conscience, a fetter on the will, and a pollution on the mind. Sin robs a man of peace, makes him a tool of Satan, and brings remorse, fear, and dark forebodings regarding the future. Sin causes man's personality to shrivel because it cuts him off from fellowship with God, and disrupts his relations with his fellowmen.

4. Death.

Physical death is the first penalty of sin. God said to Adam, "If you eat of this tree, you will surely die." Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, and in due time, he died. If he had not sinned, death would not have entered the door. From the time of the death of Adam until the present, death has never been avoided except by divine interposition as in the cases of Enoch and Elijah. Spiritual death, or the separation of the soul from God, is the result of sin. Eternal death, or the final and everlasting separation of the soul from God, is the result of sin.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for they all have sinned" Romans 5:12.
"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" Romans 6:23.

IV. The Remedy For Sin.

Sin is the tragedy without a parallel in history, but God has provided a salvation that saves from sin. The remedy is greater than the disease. The plaster is larger than the wound. "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound". What, then, is the remedy for sin? Sin's remedy lies in finding someone who can act as a substitute for the sinner, take away his sins, remove the barrier between the sinner and God, and communicate God's nature to the sinner. Jesus Christ is the one and only remedy for sin.

If you are God's faithful child, come to His throne of grace with boldness, ask the Lord to purify your heart, and cleanse you from your sins. Commit yourself to Him as you say:

"I am coming Jesus, coming,
At Thy feet I humbly bow,
I have tasted Thy salvation,
But I want the fulness now."

If you are a backslider, return to Him with a confession on your lips and ask Him to give you back the peace and joy you once had.

If you are unsaved, acknowledge your sin, repent toward God, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.