

Escaping the Sin trap - overcoming the battle within

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[0:00] The biblical doctrine of sin. There's lots of scriptures about sin. In fact, 448 times sin is mentioned an old time preacher called Wilbur Chapman who used to tell about a Methodist preacher who often spoke about the subject of sin and this preacher minced no words.

He often talked about sin. He defined it as that abominable thing that God hates. It's a good definition, isn't it? And one of the people in the congregation, one of the leaders came to him one day and urged this preacher to stop using this ugly word.

And he said, Pastor, we wish you would not speak so plainly about sin. Our young people hearing you will be more likely to indulge in sin.

Call it something else. Inhibition, error, a mistake or even a twist in our nature. And the preacher said, I understand what you mean.

And he went down to the pulpit and brought out a little bottle. And he says, this bottle contains strychnine. You'll see this label here.

[1:29] It says poison. Would you suggest that I change the label and paste something on it that is less harmful like some other thing other than poison?

And he made this point that you can call sin by other names, but it still is sin, isn't it? Sin is sin. And that's what they're doing today, isn't it? They're calling something that the Bible calls sin an abomination.

They're calling it something else that sounds harmless and nothing. So we wouldn't ever think to think of our children to be let to play with poison or explosives.

And so it's the same with preachers and with preaching that we should not be afraid to talk about sin. And I'm not going to go into the dastardly details of sin, but a sense that sin is something that we should talk about.

And in this world where it's a day of tolerance, there's little tolerance for churches and preaching that talks about sin, that treats sin from a biblical perspective.

[2:28] But it's really important that we do talk honestly about sin because sin is dangerous. It's destructive. And there's an eternal consequence from it. So we need to see sin and the ugliness of it, see it for what it is, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

Because as I say, the Bible talks a lot about sin. So what does the Bible show us about sin? Again, we can only scratch the surface and touch on a few salient verses. What does the Bible show us about sin?

And how can we find God's saving power, His redeeming power to break the chains of sin and for us to get victory? So firstly, how did sin come about?

We see that in Isaiah 14. Isaiah 14 from verse 12, it tells about how sin began. Sin began in heaven. Isaiah 14, verse 12 through 15.

Sin began in heaven with the pride and rebellion of Lucifer. It reads, Isaiah 14, 12. How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning?

[3:41] How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations? For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven. I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.

I will sit also on the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

So Satan said, I will do this, I will do that, I will do that. But God says, no, you're going to be brought down, brought down to hell. So firstly, we see, as far as the beginning of sin, we see the fall of Lucifer, number one.

Sin was his downfall, his rebellion and pride. And then further, secondly, we can see the fall of man, with the temptation and disobedience of Adam and Eve.

In Genesis 3, where it reads how the serpent came, now the serpent, speaking of the devil, Satan, now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field, which the Lord God had made.

[4:45] And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, you shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but of the fruit of the tree, which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, you shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

And the serpent said unto the woman, you shall not surely die. And then verse 5, Genesis 3, 5, For God doth know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together, and made them aprons. So we see the fall of Lucifer, we see the fall of man, Adam and Eve.

This was the beginning of sin, man's disobedience. They had the whole wide paradise of everything that you could imagine that we could want.

[6:05] And only one limit was that tree, and they took of it, and ate of it, when God said not to eat of it. Man's disobedience, and we've been affected ever since.

Mankind ever since, has been subject to the result of sin, which is death. As we read in Romans 5, verse 12, it reads, When you think about it, sin is hereditary, isn't it?

It's like it's our DNA. It's in all of us. We all have it. I saw a title of a sermon that said, Sin messes up everything.

It's true, isn't it? Sin messes up everything, right from the garden, right from the beginning. Surely it does. Sin messes up everything. Sin brings death, spiritual death.

We see Romans 6, 23, For the wages of sin, what it's going to cost is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. So there's a contrast there.

[7:14] Sin, death, the gift of God, eternal life. And it reads on that all have sinned, Romans 3, 23, For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Romans 3, 10, As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one. So as far as sin, sin is a universal problem. You can't say, well, I'm not a sinner.

I don't, some would kind of put that case, they would say, well, I haven't gone and, you know, committed some atrocious, horrible sin or broken some obvious law or done something obviously wrong, but yet, the Bible says, all have sinned.

We're all in the same boat. All have sinned. There's none, none righteous, not one. No, not one. So sin is a universal problem. Another thing about sin is it separates man from God.

We see Isaiah 59, verse 2, But your iniquities have separated between you and your God and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear.

[8:21] Sin separates man from God. Another thing about sin is it enslaves us. John 8, 34, Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

You're the slave of sin, the servant of sin. Sin enslaves us, it captures us. So what is sin? What is sin? And we could name all kinds of sins.

There's a big long list. I think someone was, actually I was in correspondence with someone lately and someone reckoned there's 667 sins in the Bible. It's almost 666.

It's like, there's that many sins that the Bible specifically names. But then you could say, well, there's a whole lot more that might not be named. But what is sin? Nowadays, it's a politically

correct world and people are trying to redefine things, aren't they?

And they try to redefine even sin. with other more comfortable words. For example, drunkenness has now become chemical dependency. Sort of.

[9:23] Sodomy is an alternative lifestyle. Pride. Pride is a superiority complex or an inflated ego.

Adultery is an affair. Sounds much more comfortable, doesn't it? Gossip. Now they call it sharing. Sharing. You can see how the world would try to label or excuse sin as something that sounds less serious.

But God's definition is really clear, isn't it? The Bible is very clear. His definition of sin has not been revised. There's no updated version. If the Bible says it's sin, then it's sin.

That's very clear. He's the one who decides what's sin and what's not sin. If it was sin then, it still is sin now. So what is sin? Again, what is sin?

One evangelist defined it like this, a sin is any thought or action that falls short of God's will. When you think, there's a whole lot that could be encompassed in that.

[10:24] Falling short of God's will. Any thought or action. What does the Word say? It talks about a high look, a proud heart, and the ploughing of the wicked is sin.

So even when the wicked go out and plough their fields, well, that's sin too. They're just everything that a man does just about. Sin is violating God's law. Now, don't get depressed.

It's a bit depressing so far about sin. It's a woeful thing. Truly it is, isn't it? It's an awful thing. It's a vile thing. It's a sad, loathsome thing. And so we're just telling you what's in all here tonight.

The Bible talks much about sin and we should know about it because it's a universal problem. We read further about sin. It's unrighteousness. It's violating God's law.

We see that there, 1 John 3, 4. Whoever commits sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law. It's breaking the law, God's law, violating God's law.

[11:21] And the next one there, in part, 1 John 5, 17. All unrighteousness is sin. Sin is unrighteousness. So it's very clear the Bible talks much about sin.

It's violating God's law. It's unrighteousness. It's transgression. And there's no human cure. So we can hear all these bad news and further, we actually don't have a solution that's a human answer to it.

It says, It's telling us there, look, you can't change your complexion.

Whether you've got dark skin or white skin or in-between skin, you can't change the colour of your skin. Just like a leopard can't change its spots. It's always going to be a leopard.

It's always going to have spots. It's the same with us, isn't it? With our sin. We can't change our sin. We can't humanly cure this dread affliction that is our sin.

[12:23] So there's no human cure for sin. We can't change ourselves. Some would kind of teach that you can pull yourself up by your own bootstraps as the cults out there that would say, well, if you do enough good works or you do this or that of their works that they would expect of you, then that's going to make you pass the grade.

No, it's not about that. And because sin is the ultimate problem. Sin has to be dealt with. And sin is deadly. It's got deadly power. Like we read before, the wages of sin is death.

So we see that sin is a huge problem. We've all got it. And it's a dread result that we're all subject to death. Of course, physical death.

But the Bible talks about the second death, eternal death. Another thing about sin, in 1 Kings 8, 38, it tells us sin is like this oozing sore from a deadly plague.

The Bible compares sin to leprosy. Leprosy is like a type, a picture of sin. What it does to us spiritually, we see what leprosy did in the old covenant days of the lepers and what a picture they were of a woeful state, a terrible condition.

[13:34] Leprosy, it's a terrible affliction, isn't it? It eats away, it destroys, it disfigures the body a little at a time. And sin is like that too. It can eat away at us, destroy us, it can harm us, it's ugly, it's loathsome, it's vile, it's repulsive.

You know, the Bible would say very clearly that God hates sin. And yet some would say, oh, it's not sin, it's, you know, as we talked about before, it's just a little mistake or they kind of downplay it, downgrade it, excuse it, try to accommodate it.

The Bible says it's sin, it's hateful to God, it's repulsive, it's loathsome like leprosy. But the world today around us would say, oh, there's just a, that's their lifestyle, that's their choice, that's their decision, that's how they want to be, even though it's hateful to God.

And so, I urge you tonight to, don't fall for the world's kind of way of thinking about sin, that it's something we excuse and accommodate and turn a blind eye to, but see it from God's point of view, that it's hurtful to God, it's hateful to God, and his wrath and his judgment is rightfully against it.

So, it's a terrible picture that we've started with here. But there is hope. One of the most beautiful Bible verses I know is 1 Peter 2, 24.

[15:00] It tells of our Lord, 1 Peter 2, verse 24, it says, Who? Christ. Who? His own self. Bear our sins in his own body, on the tree, that we being dead to sin should live unto righteousness by whose stripes ye were healed.

What a beautiful verse that is to us. To think that, and we're talking about sin, but make it personal now, my sin. It says, our sins, yours and mine.

That our sins were here 2,000 years ago on that hill called Calvary, on that rugged cross, in the very person of our Saviour.

That's a telling thought, isn't it? That our sin, he bore those sins, our very sins, he bore them, he carried them in his own body, on the cross. That's astonishing, really, isn't it?

To think that there at the cross, at the hill called Calvary, that he carried our sins there. And what's more, he did everything to pay for our sin there, and it's penalty.

[16:07] And so looking back, we can see where Calvary was, we can see our sin was there, the payment for it, and his pardon that he secured for us. And our sin, if we've trusted him, our sin has been fully paid for and pardoned.

That's the wonder of it, isn't it? To think of that. I know this morning someone was telling me that my message spoke to them that they've never really had assurance of salvation before, but now that they have.

Today they've got an assurance of salvation after many years of following the Saviour. Because it's getting that understanding that our salvation was paid for.

It was there, it was done, it's the finished work. It's done. You don't have to measure up to anything of men. In Christ, our penalty was paid at the cross.

And that salvation was accomplished, finished. It is finished, he said. Our sin was paid. That's salvation. That's salvation. He secured pardon for us, our sin paid for, fully paid.

[17:15] That's salvation, our sin paid. What then? After salvation, there's the sanctification part. Some mix the two and confuse the two where it gets messy.

We're saved by grace through faith at the cross in Christ's death for us as we trusted him. The sanctification part is the second stage.

It's our walk with God, our discipleship. And of course, God wants us to grow, to grow, to go on in maturity, in Christ, to mature in our faith. And in that part, that is the sanctification part that follows on from that point of salvation.

In the sanctification part, sanctification meaning holiness, that walk of holiness, of that walk with God, that growing more holy, like him. In that other stage, we still have to deal with sin because we've still got the reality that we're still inclined to sin.

We still have to deal with sin in that stage of our life. Now, there's some who teach what's called sinless perfection, sinless perfection. Now, truly, it's a false teaching about sin.

[18:28] It's the teaching that once we have a right relationship with God, we will not ever sin. We will not ever sin. Never sin again. Now, let me tell you, here's a way of kind of illustrating it.

This is entirely tongue-in-cheek to look at this idea of sinless perfection, sinless perfection.

Someone told about a church that believed this, that a person has sinless perfection, they've got to trust Christ and then be baptised and then they're going to have sinless perfection.

And a visitor to this church heard about this teaching and he was tired of dealing with his habitual sin without any success. Unfortunately, it was the middle of winter and the river was near frozen, but he was willing to get baptised because he thought this was going to make him sinlessly perfect. And so the man, with much persistence, he got the elders to baptise him in the river. And after the man and two elders came out of the freezing cold water, the man was so excited and he said, I feel so good, I'm not even cold.

And one elder turned to the other and he said, he's lying. We have to do it again. He'd already sinned. Now the point is, yeah, when we trust Christ, but we're still subject to sin.

[19:43] We still have sin. We still battle with sin. Even if you say, I have no sin, well, you've got pride. You know, the sin, the Bible does not teach sinless perfection. The only perfection is Christ in you.

Of course, we should strive for sinless perfection, but we cannot have sinless perfection, this side of glory. That's yet future. Perfectionism is this belief that we can be free from making mistakes, from wrong choices, even intentional disobedience to God.

The reality is, we still can. Of course, the other side of the coin is spiritual complacency, which is another, it's another grievous error. So you've got sinless perfection on one side and then you've got spiritual complacency.

In other words, couldn't, you know, kind of carefree, careless, easy come, easy go, she'll be right, mate, kind of carelessness, complacency. It's another grievous error where we don't care whether we sin or not and we excuse it.

We don't care about living a holy life. That's a false idea too, isn't it? We're not preaching that here tonight. We should strive for perfection, we should strive for holiness and we shouldn't be like this lazy camp that can't care less about walking right and just thinking I'm not going to make any attempt or effort.

[21:04] Certainly, I put to you tonight that in this subject of sin, that we can expect a continual battle with sin. It's going to go on and on. We see that, for example, in 1 John 1, it talks about it.

John writes, 1 John 1 verse 8, if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. Thankfully, verse 9, if we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So whilst we cannot clean up ourselves, he can. As an old-time preacher, John Flavel, said, Of course, there's some people that, you know, the Catholic system where they beat themselves up, they flagellate themselves, they punish their body, they go through deep privation, thinking that's somehow going to pay for their sin.

All their tears and all their ceremonies are not going to pay for their sin. You know, all the pilgrimages people do, all the fasting, all the weeping and crying at an altar, that's not going to take away the sin.

But it's whether we come to him who can take our sin, whether we know him. And for our guilt, there's only one sure stain remover. There's no cure, humanly speaking.

[22:35] What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. As the Lord tells us, it's the blood. It washes away our sin. Our salvation, of course. And then, I guess there's still that coming unto him, that walk, that cleansing of our walk, which is kind of more the sanctifying aspect.

And the Lord's Word talks about how he works in us. We find this cleansing. There is a cleansing. Because sin, again, it's pictured as something that's dirty, that's foul, that should be cleansed.

And we see that, for example, in the Psalms. It talks about another way to get God's cleansing is applying the Word of God to our life. Wherewithal, or with what, shall a young man cleanse his way?

It's by taking heed thereto, according to thy word. How can a young man cleanse his way? Taking heed to the Word of God. Verse 11 there, Psalm 119, Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee.

So there's a cleansing from the Word as well. We can get that. So we should seek the Word to hide it in our heart, apply it, live it out, make it such that we'll intentionally apply it to our circumstances.

[23:48] There's victory there. A daily victory. And so in this sanctifying part, this part that is our sanctification, after salvation, we've still got a running race to run.

We've still got to walk with God to walk. And we've still got to face temptation as we battle with sin in every day. In every day. All of us. Hebrews 12, it reads, of course, the familiar one, Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every way and the sin which doth so easily beset us.

Let us run, run with patience the race that is set before us. And it reads on, Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

So it's telling us there lay aside every weight. You know, there was talk of weight this morning, of the burden of sin, laying aside of it, putting aside of that weight, that sin which does so easily beset us.

So it says as we're running the race, there is sin which does easily beset us. There's some besetting sins, the sin that seems to dog our steps, that kind of, we've just got to keep shaking it off, it's hanging on to us.

[25:04] And as far as sin, what matters most of course is salvation, that we have salvation. Make that clear tonight, the distinction here, that we're saved. Once saved, we're forever saved.

Once saved, he forgives us our sin, past, present, and future, that we are saved, we're in Christ, we have a secure salvation. But then there's the walk side, the sanctification side, that that is the walk, that he wants us to walk clean, to get clean, to keep clean, to keep close to him.

And so once we've got that great salvation, the great gospel, glad news, that avails for the sinner, we can know that Christ died for us. Christ died for our sins as we read elsewhere.

We can know the atoning work of Christ on the cross. We can know as it says in 1 John 2 verse 2, he's the propitiation, he satisfies God's wrath for our sins, not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

So God extends the whole world, this offer of salvation, as in John 3 verse 16, to all who will believe. He's made provision. And once we are saved, though we still continue to face the daily reality of temptation, we will still face that.

[26:14] And so, brother, sister, you might say, I've trusted Christ, but I've got this sin problem. That is common to man. We all have that. We all have that fight of the flesh versus the spirit.

I know brother Peter talked about the flesh, the spirit, the battle going on. Once we're saved, we will have that daily reality of temptation. But God will help us, as that Hebrews 12 scripture says, to lay aside the weight.

God will help us to lay aside the besetting sin. He'll help us to take resolve, to intentionally resolve, to lay it down, and to lay it aside. And friends, those victories might be just little steps of faith where we say, we're not going to do that sin.

We make a determination moment by moment. I'm going to walk with the Lord. I'm going to please God with every day of my life, with every hour, with every minute. We can break it down, what's achievable, that God will give you victory.

Paul described this inner conflict that he had, this ongoing struggle with sin. In Romans 7, it talks about it as it unpacks that fight of the flesh and the spirit. In Romans 7 verse 13, it talks about the exceeding sinfulness of sin.

[27:25] See sin as sinful, as sinful as exceeding, exceedingly so, sinful. Paul says, sin dwells in me. So again, you're saved, you're on the way to glory, you're his, but you still have that walk part to do.

And that's where the sin is still, it's an ongoing fight that we all have to fight. It says in Romans 7, 17, Paul says that sin dwells in me.

Sin dwells in me. Verse 18, I know that in me that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. Even Paul, this man of God, this must be one of the most greatest examples of a godly human being.

Paul says, in me. In my flesh dwelleth no good thing. For to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.

He says, for the good that I would do, sorry, I'll say that again. For the good that I would, I do not. But the evil which I would not, in other words, I would rather not do, that I do.

[28:36] Now if I do that, I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. So he's saying here, the good that I would, the good that I really want to do, I'm not doing it.

And the evil that I would rather not do, that I am doing. This is the struggle. He says, I find then a law that when I would do good, evil is present with me.

So this is the reality, brothers and sisters. And Paul says this, verse 22. Paul says, So here's Paul, he's being very honest here, and we could put ourselves in Paul's shoes, and say, I can identify with that.

As a saved believer, Paul says, sin dwells in me. Sin works death in us. It's like a deadly cancer, it's this heavy load. The psalmist called it a great and heavy burden.

He says, my iniquities have gone over my head. As a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me. Psalm 38, verse 4. It's a load, it's a weight. We cannot bear it.

[29:49] We cannot be free from sin by our own energy or effort. This is the problem with the cults. This is the problem with every kind of works-based kind of religion, even works-based Christianity, of course.

Anyone who says it's by works that we're going to please God by our works, that we're going to have salvation by our works, by what we do. They've got it wrong because they've still got the heavy burden.

That's too heavy for them. They can't get free from sin by their own effort or energy, by their own works. He must take it. He must take the burden. He must bear it.

But thankfully, the Word of God tells us that we have a merciful and faithful High Priest, our Lord, who loves us and understands us. And it tells us how we can find His grace.

We can go to Him and find His grace. You know, it talks about how He's the advocate. He's that paraclete. He's the one who comes aside. He's the one who comes aside of us to be our comforter.

[30:47] He's the one who can be our representative before the Father. And it says, we can go to this great and faithful High Priest and we can find grace to help in time of need.

So, brother, sister, you might say, preacher here tonight, look, I've got a battle. There's a battle I'm facing. There's a battle within. Me too. There's this heavy burden. But thank God, He's the burden bearer.

He carried our sins and our sorrows. And may we keep that tenderheartedness towards Him such that we'll ask Him to help us with that load, to lay it upon Him. As it reads, it says, lay thy burden, cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee.

He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. It says, casting all our care upon Him for He careth for us. He's the one that we can cast that heavy burden on and not carry it ourselves. We can't bear it.

In John 16, it tells us how the Holy Spirit will help us too. It says, when He, the Holy Spirit, is come, He will reprove or convict the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.

[31:51] We can get the Spirit's help, the Holy Spirit who'll keep us in that relationship with God. He'll help us not to accommodate our sin. He'll lead us rather to hunger and thirst after righteousness, hunger and thirst, and not fall into sin and error.

But the reality is the battle will be constant until our grave. It tells us how in Romans 6, 14, for sin shall not have dominion over you for you are not under the law but under grace.

When we come into God's grace we see that we're not under the dominion of sin. Now the word dominion, it means something that has supreme authority or control. God doesn't want sin to have supreme authority over your life.

God doesn't want sin to have supreme control, that sin would control us, but that He would have dominion. Amen? That Christ would have dominion. In the context it's talking about yielding ourselves to God.

That's the way to be free, isn't it? When sin doesn't have dominion but grace has dominion, the King of glory, the gracious God that we love, that He has dominion as we yield to Him, as we come under His mastery, not under the control of sin.

[33:10] We think of sin, it talks about sin as being deceptive, how sin is deceitful, it says, our own hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked. It tells us sin that it can harden a man's heart.

When you talk to people about the Lord, you get some people and you can see their heart is as hard as stone, isn't it? They just harden themselves to the gospel. They won't even take a moment

to hear a word from our lips about the Saviour, they will just slam the door.

Sin can harden men's hearts and make them like stone. We see in Hebrews 3.13 that it says, Exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened, hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Now this world that we live in, people would trivialise sin, they would try to downplay sin, but we as God's people, not that we need to be obsessed with sin or taking it to an extent like that, but we should be alert to sin, we should be vigilant, we should seek God's help to overcome it.

As I say, some people would trivialise sin and kind of try to excuse it. For example, you might say, Eve, she just took a little bite, Genesis 3.6.

[34:23] We see Lot's wife, she just took a little look, looking back at Sodom. We see Uzzah, as the ark was shaking, he just took a little touch. We see the foolish virgins, they just had a little neglect with their lamps, in Matthew 25.

We see Ananias and Sapphira, they just told a little lie. Sin is deceptive, isn't it? You can just think, oh, it's just a little sin, I can excuse this or that, but one little sin is just as bad as any other sin, isn't it?

May we not cultivate sin, or excuse it, but rather kill it, crucify the flesh, die to self. May we not treat sin lightly, but rather forsake such.

We see that we should not be careless, as the word tells us, let the wicked forsake his way, the unrighteous man his thoughts. Let him return unto the Lord, and he'll have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

The same we should forsake the sinful way. We see that we should flee from sin, as Joseph did, not hang around it, not try to kind of accommodate the sinful situation, but rather get right away, get right out of it.

[35:37] Realise sin for what it is and forsake it. And I was with some people watching a theatre production and there were some questionable things, and they just got right out of their seats and they left that building because they wouldn't accommodate.

If it was clearly it was wrong, there was accommodation of something that was sinful, something that was an abomination, there was a crassness, a crudity, they just left the theatre.

Good on them, that's what we should do. We should be saying, no, I'm not going to have a bar of it. I'm not just going to excuse a little eensy-weensy bit of it, I'm going to forsake that, I'm going to flee from sin like Joseph did.

Realise sin for what it is and forsake it, don't fall for it, don't be deceived and fall for temptation. And really that's what 1 Corinthians 10 talks about, that another help with sin, another help for you believer with sin is that there is an escape route, there is an exit sign, there is an exit door, and we can take the escape route.

It says in 1 Corinthians 10 13, there hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you're able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that you may be able to bear it.

[36:48] So when you face a temptation, a situation of temptation, look for the exit sign. In other words, find how to get out of the situation. Don't stay where the sin is, where there's temptation, where you're likely to fall, get right out of it, get right out of it.

And that can be difficult, like in a workplace for example, when there's certain sinful things going on, well look, you can make a reason why you can't stay in that situation. I know I've heard of some talk in these days of, you know, people are telling me lately they've got a new job and they've got to do an LGBT awareness kind of course and whatnot, and there's things where they're foisting these things upon people such that it's hard to maintain a job these days without having to kind of at least listen to some of this stuff.

We don't have to agree with it, but you've got to find that place where, no, I'm not going to actually even partake of that in any way. But the world is going to test us in that regard, isn't it?

It's constant. We face that constantly in the workplace, in work settings. We've got to find God's will and God helping us to find the right choice, the godly choice to make.

Friends, you can have victory tonight. We're talking about sin. We're talking about salvation for sin. That's eternal. And talking then the sanctification part, that's that daily walk with God.

[38:08] And in that daily walk, God doesn't want us to practice sin. It's his will for us that we have sanctification. God's will is our holiness. That's what we must aim for, to strive to please God.

Not that we're trying to deserve or commend ourselves or to do so in a prideful way, but our motive is to please our Lord, is to please God.

That is what we want to do, isn't it? Our motive is not to gain credit for our walk with God, but to please our Lord. It's to please him, not ourselves.

And not to love our sin and linger there, but rather to walk closer to our Lord. Moment by moment, he'll help you to hate sin and die to sin. Essentially, it's that abiding in Christ, isn't it?

That as we save people, that we'll more abide with him, we'll remain in him, we'll hold fast to him, we'll lean hard upon him, we'll find our rest in him, we'll rest in his love, we'll rest in his salvation, we'll find his strength to overcome sin in a day-by-day basis.

[39:18] And the Lord makes provision, he provides the way of escape, as we see here, he provides the empowerment of his Holy Spirit, such that you're not alone, you've got the other comforter, you've got him who comes alongside to help, and he lives with inside of you, the Holy Spirit, his empowerment.

It tells us further that the Bible tells us that we're partakers of the divine nature. So God's provision for us when we face sin is the person of Christ, it's Christ in you. You're not on your own.

When you face a situation of temptation, think, well, my Lord is with me, he's inside of me, and I'm going to pray and ask him to help me get through this, to find victory, to rely upon him and his strength.

Now the world wouldn't care less about this stuff that we're talking about tonight. Some would treat sin lightly and carelessly and try to excuse it, just condone it and accommodate it and overlook it. But even not doing what God wants us to do is sin as well. We could think, well, I'm avoiding all the sin, but I'm not really doing much for God. I'm just being a bit of a, you know, just take it easy kind of Christian.

[40:28] It says, and this is further thought to be provoked about, that even to not do good, that is a sin as well. Not doing what God wants us to do. If God's put something on your heart to do, if God's given you a calling, if God's given you a gifting, if God's given you something that is prompting you to be up and doing and about, then to not do that is sin too.

You know, it's called the sin of omission, isn't it? So I'm hoping I'm not leaving you in a deplorable, woeful, desperation state here tonight, but it's the reality, isn't it?

It's the reality. And I'm not meaning to talk lightly about these things, because these are very important matters. And sometimes I make that mistake when I'm preaching. I'm a little light-hearted, inclined to be light-hearted, but this is really a very solemn, somber, serious subject.

Truly it is. Sin is destructive. Sin is destructive. Look at the destruction of sin. It kills, it destroys.

Look at what families are suffering when there's obvious sin, this hurt.

It destroys. It destroys peace. It destroys purity. It destroys people. And sin will destroy your good name as well.

[41:45] It only takes one sin. You see with these politicians or even these sports stars, they're on the front page of some misdemeanor or some mishap, and it's on the front page.

But really, it's not whether we're on the front page. It's in the sight of a holy God. God sees our sin, doesn't he? And sin, by sin, we can lose our good name.

As this scripture talks about Proverbs, a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches and loving favour rather than silver or gold. Now, how do you get a good name?

Don't compromise. You have a good name that you're above reproach. So that whether it's in the work sphere or the home sphere or the public sphere, that there's no dirt on you that they can dig up, that you've got a good name.

That's a good thing, isn't it? And it's only by the grace of God we can have a good name. But it's more important than great riches. So rather than compromising, taking a job that's in the, you know, serving alcohol or taking a job that's going to take you away from fellowship in church and worship,

compromising by accommodating things that are questionable.

[42:59] I know Julie had a time when she was working in the music department and she had to say, no, that's not right for me to be amongst that, to be in that. And you want to make a stand when you face those situations.

No, actually, no, that's not right for me and I'm not going to accommodate that. A good name is rather to be chosen. What do you think of when you think of names like Cain, Ahab, Jezebel, Judas, Achan?

We know what they're known for, their name. It says it all, doesn't it? A good name. Sin will destroy a good name. Sin will destroy your body. Immorality. Some have got, you know, horrible diseases from immorality.

Sin will destroy your body. Alcohol. It's destructive. You know, the bar man, I'm told, says, name your poison. That's what it is.

That's exactly what it is. Name your poison. What do you want to drink? What poison do you want to drink today? As he gives you something from the bar and he holds it out to you. It's toxic. It's poison.

[44:06] And make your own mind up. The Bible says, don't even look at it while it's red, while it's sloshing around in the cup. Proverbs 20, verse 1. It's like a snake, isn't it? It's like a viper.

It's going to bite you. Sin. This is serious stuff. You reap what you sow. You might say, well, preacher, I'll take my chances. I'll keep doing the sin that I know is a sin.

It says you're going to reap what you sow. There's a reaping time. And sin will destroy you. Sin will destroy you. It'll destroy you emotionally. You'll have guilt.

That guilt. That guilt. It's going to hang on to you. Unless you give it to God. Pride. Sin is pride, isn't it? It's the devil. That's what started it all.

Sin. Worldliness. We just accommodate this or that. And before we know it, we've got no testimony at all. We just blend in like a chameleon. I used to be like that at one time in my Christian walk.

[45:03] I'd just blend in like a chameleon at school and just go along with the rest of the crowd. But then in time, I realised, no, that's not the way to be. I can't be a chameleon. I've got to stand for God.

I've got to stand for right. I don't want to just blend in and use the coarse language and the dirty jokes and the evil of this world.

No, I'm going to stand for Christ. I'm not going to settle for worldliness. Lukewarmness. It's all sin, isn't it? It's going to destroy you. It's destructive. But thank God, as believers, by God's grace, we can overcome sin.

By God's help, there is victory for you. It's in that day by day, moment by moment, that walk with Him. He'll help you overcome. He'll help you get victory. God wants you to know victory.

You're saved, yes. There's some steps yet to make to glory. He wants you to get victory in that stage too, in the sanctification stage. Our daily walk.

[46:02] We can know victory. We can know that godly character. So, I know, labouring it a bit here tonight, take steps to be vigilant.

It says, keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. God cares about your heart. He wants your heart to be soft towards Him. Not that hardened heart.

Not that clay that's hard and brittle and won't be moulded. But rather to be soft towards God. Keep thy heart. Guard it. Take steps to be vigilant.

Be wise where you go. Be wise about the relationships you cultivate. Let go of pride. Cultivate a heart of humility. Another important strategy is don't give the devil an inch.

It's just a little sin. Just a little leaven. Just a little is going to do a lot. Ephesians 4.27.

[47:02] Neither give place to the devil. Don't give him an inch. Don't give the devil an inch. Now, of course, as we walk with God, as we grow in our faith, we're constantly tested in the workplace, amongst people that we rub shoulders with, our old mates.

You know, there's some people who have been telling me how they used to be in the druggie drink scene. And now it's a challenge. They're standing for Christ. They're not drinking like the world, like they used to be.

That they're making a stand for their faith. And that can be hard when others are used to you being, oh, join the, you're just one of the boys, you know. That can be hard. But God will give you the grace to.

Neither give place to the devil and abstain from all appearance of evil. So, we've been talking tonight about sin, talking about this sanctification, this walk with God. You can know the reality of righteousness now.

And it's not a self-righteousness. Can I underline that? It's not a righteousness where when we talk about sin, we think about, oh yeah, the sin in others.

[48:09] We can easily find the sin in others. No, it's this one here. It's the man in the mirror that we've got to look at. And it's a righteousness we need, not a self-righteousness, but a righteousness that's wrought of God.

His righteousness. Imputed. In other words, it's reckoned to us. We see, as it tells us, that the one who knew no sin became sin for us. Talking about sin, he became sin for us.

That we, who knew no righteousness, might be made righteous in him. He imputes his righteousness as David says here. It's a blessedness that God imputes righteousness.

So this word impute, just to kind of tease out what it means, impute means to take something that belongs to someone and credit it to another's account.

He credits it to us. That's his righteousness, isn't it? We've got nothing. We're probably in the red. In reality, we're in the red, right? We've got the debt. We've got a debt we cannot pay.

[49:12] But he imputes. He reckons his righteousness to our account. And that's the wonder of it, isn't it? Friends tonight, do you know him? Have you been saved? To know your sins forgiven forever.

And then for you that are saved, can we just think about these things that we've been talking about? The blessedness that God imputes his righteousness to us without works.

It's the Lord having his way with you. It's the Lord having preeminence in your life. It's yielding to his will moment by moment, step by step, day by day, hour by hour, as we trust in him, his righteousness.

And as we wear only, really, his garments of righteousness before the Father, not our own.

Because as we talked about this morning, all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Even the best we wear is smelly, dirty, filthy, stained, unworthy.

It's fit for the garbage can, not even for the goodwill. That's the garments, our garments, right? Our righteousness. But he gives us his righteousness, his righteousness.

[50:16] Praise God for that. Salvation, it's not by our works. And our righteousness is not by our works, not by our own merit or deserving, but his giving, his strengthening, as we yield to him.

So, can you find in him your refuge tonight? Can you find in him victory? Victory in Jesus, it's in him. God's grace is for us even when sin abounds.

You might say, preacher, I'm hearing all this horrible talk tonight about sin, and I'm there, the sin, it's besetting me, the sin, it's day by day, it's every, every day, I've got sin, I'm dealing with it.

God's grace is for us even when, even when sin abounds, grace does much more abound. Now, that's not to excuse sin, but that God's grace avails for you, even though you feel unworthy, even though you feel, and we are, unworthy.

You can know victory. Go to prayer. Go to God's word. God helping you, God will help you to develop a godly character. It's who we are, not what we do.

[51:27] Are we in Christ? That's the point. Are we saved? And then the sanctifying is a moment by moment. It's that walking with him. It's his Holy Spirit working, and it's a transforming power as he changes us from glory to glory into that same image.

It's through Christ. It's by his spirit. Notice that, by the spirit of the Lord. We're changed. And so, friends, tonight, I know it's been a bit of a long one here tonight.

We can confront the enemy that's within. It's sin. It's the world, the flesh, the devil. We can have victory. Sometimes our worst enemy is ourselves. We've got to crucify the flesh.

We've got to let God have his way. We've got to get saved, number one, and then as saved people, let's dig deep. Let's yearn after him. Let's hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Let's go hard after God. Let's seek first his righteousness, his kingdom. And the Lord does the changing in us by his spirit from the inside out.

[52:31] It's not that we work it up. You know, sometimes we can think, it's my righteousness. No. It's his. It's his righteousness. It's actually his. That's what we need.

Our righteousness will fail us, but his righteousness will not fail us. And he'll help you get victory to confront the enemy within and find victory. By grace we can be saved, and by grace we can be sanctified.

Let us pray. Lord, we thank you that your Holy Spirit is so tender, and Lord, you're so patient, so long-suffering, such that we, frail creatures, always need you.

Lord, help us to realise that. Not to have the pride of the devil that said this or that, but you brought him down. Lord, not as Adam and Eve who tried to excuse that one bite, as it were, that one thing, that disobedience.

Lord, we know we're all subject to this dread condition of sin. We know our only hope is the blood of Jesus shed for us.

[53:42] We pray each one here tonight might know, Jesus, you died for me on that cross. You died, you took, in your body, you took my sin, you nailed it there. It was there.

Two thousand odd years ago, it was there on that hill. As your body was nailed, our sin was nailed there on that body, on that tree. Lord, our sin, you paid for it.

Lord, we can't understand that, how that can be. Yet you did that for us. Lord, such grace. Lord, help us now as saved people as we've trusted you. Help us with our walk, that day-by-day victory that only comes from you, of having your righteousness as you have your way in us, as we yield to you.

As we stop our own self-will, even our own self-righteousness, Lord, that we would depend more upon you to get victory. Every step of the way, it's by your grace.

Thank you, Lord, for that. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen. Amen.