

Missio Dei Fellowship exists to glorify God by delighting in Him and making Him known through the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Insidiousness of Sin

Selected Passages

PowerPoint Presentation: None

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SermonAudio blurb: In the last few weeks startling and serious sins have come to light in both the larger, national level and in a smaller, local level that deserves our attention. Many would say they understand the greatness of sin in this world and yet there is a steady stream of people who find themselves trapped in sin, while claiming Jesus to be their Lord and Savior. This sermon is an attempt to bring about a sense of sobriety in how we view ourselves in light of the bible's teaching about sin and salvation and holiness.

I. Introduction.

- A. Turn to Romans 3 and Psalm 139.
- B. This last week Dolly Parton died and her death sparked an online debate that many jumped into with various opinions.
- C. Meanwhile, on another front I watched the disintegration of the leadership of an entire church take place. These men were leaders in a major conservative Christian conference called G3 started at that church and they had to resign as serious sins were came to light.
- D. Then there is the local level that is even more sad and shocking, where fathers are arrested for crimes against their children.
- E. It is my personal conviction that the answer to all of this lies in a failure to understand the actual power of sin, reality of salvation, and the cost of sanctification.

II. The Power of Sin.

- A. The lie about sin isn't whether it exists or not. The most common lie we tell ourselves (but we don't admit it) is that it is not as pervasive and powerful as it really is.
 - 1. And yet the bible describes all of humanity to be its prisoner.
 - a. Romans 3:7. "Under sin" is not just a couple of words. It speaks of enslavement, under the dominion of sin.
 - b. But each of us are NOT to be viewed in relation to one another. Rather, we are to ever and always be viewed in relation to God.

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- (1) As such you find passages like Psalm 139, that glorious psalm that speaks of how the writer, David, considers human life . . . his life.
 - (2) But when doing this, he doesn't end up considering all sorts of other human relationships and how they relate to him. Rather he sees the fulness and wholeness of his existence in relation to God.
 - (3) So David begins to think through this reality of God's intimate knowledge of him. And I invite you to do the same.
 - (a) David first sees God's kindness toward him (17). He counts it as precious that God thinks about him.
 - (b) vss 19-22. And so David contemplates the wicked and thinks how he hates those who love wickedness.
 - (c) But let the words of vss 23-24 then wash over you.
2. And yet, when did you last cry out to God like David? And I believe that it is because we do not believe that the power and presence of sin is as great as it truly is.
 - a. This is why truly excellent theologians see the doctrine of sin as of most great importance. And yet, it is also the doctrine that is most rationalized away and diminished in both the pulpit and living room.
 - b. Ephesians 2:1-3 is a good place to undo that sort of weak, deceptive thinking.
3. But what about the Christian? That passage describes what we WERE, not what we are. And this is true. And this is where passages such as Romans 7 come into play.
 - a. In this chapter the question that is always raised is if it deals with Paul before he was a Christian or after he was converted. But I believe that it is written in such a way as to make it work either way.
 - b. This is because the struggle with sin is not the focus. Paul is dealing with a very different issue—the ability of the Law to change lives. And the resounding answer is that the law cannot accomplish this—it cannot change the heart of man.

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- c. Time prevents me from a thorough explanation here, but Paul says in vs 12 that God's law is good and holy.
 - d. So (13) is the law what brings the sentence of death upon me? No.
 - e. He develops this in vss 14-25 by "For we know" in vs 14; "For I know" in vs 18 and "I find then" in vs 21
 - f. And this is what is key to grasp. **Sin is so powerful that it can take something holy, good and perfect, like God's Law, and all that happens is the law produces even more sin in us.**
 - g. And all the way through the New Testament we find this constant refrain that though you may be saved, you still find that this thing called "the flesh" is constantly present.
4. So, what is the answer? What is the hope? This is the point of the gospel.

III. The Reality of Salvation.

- A. In all the universe, nothing is more powerful than sin.
 - 1. Believe it or not, your life proves it.
 - 2. And massive amounts of money are made and spent on managing the presence and power of sin. And not one cent actually changes a single thing.
 - 3. We merely redefine terms. We invent therapy and counseling and encounter groups all to help us see that we are but victims of trauma.
 - 4. And so we invent lists and rules and resolutions.
 - 5. We try harder, and we fail. So we bear down even more, and we fail. For we cannot conquer sin.
- B. The reason is that the only thing that can conquer sin is not a thing, but a person, Jesus Christ our Lord.
 - 1. Romans 5:6, 8, 10.
 - a. Go back to vs 8 and note carefully the phrase, "for us," because in it is life and forgiveness.
 - b. Vs 1 then points us to the promise if we believe the "for us" in vs 8.
 - c. So vs 15 describes this as a "gift." Which is the understatement of all eternity.

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2. Ephesians 2:4-9.
 - a. We were dead in sin.
 - b. “But God. . . .”
 3. This is why both the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ matters in the utmost. We are helpless before these enemies. And they are not enemies that lay outside us but are part of our very being.
 4. But God, who knows us in the fullest, most intimate way, who has searched every thought, loved us. Not because we are or were lovable, but because He is full of grace and kindness to those who are His enemies.
- C. And having believed, having been saved from the power of sin and death. And having been given life out from death and the secure hope of the resurrection and eternal life, we are called to walk in holiness.

IV. The Cost of Sanctification.

- A. We are called to holiness, which is at the center of this fancy word called sanctification.
1. And this is where you will find your great problem at some point in your life. I speak here to Christians.
 2. You will forget the power of sin and you will begin to lie to yourself and say that this or that is not too bad.
 3. And so Peter tells us to fear in 1 Peter 1:14-19.
 - a. When did you last fear, my beloved?
 - b. We do not sing of the redemption from sin through Christ so that you can feel all warm. We sing of it because we need to be reminded, as Paul says, that we were bought with a price, the very blood of our Savior.
 - c. We do not take the Lord’s Supper each week for a snack. We faithfully warn each of you to take it in a proper manner for the bible tells us to do so. When did you last actually heed that warning?
 4. Paul does not give a suggestion in 1 Corinthians 10:12. He faithfully warns you, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”
- B. As we live, we live wisely by remembering (NOT FORGETTING) the extent and power and presence of sin. We become fools when we forget.

M i s s i o D e i F e l l o w s h i p

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1. Because we are then able to run to Jesus and be reminded that He died for our sin and has given us the gift of life and righteousness.
2. And then we can remember to walk with care, humbly rather than arrogantly, knowing that the days are evil.
3. That we fight it with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. We battle it through growing in our knowledge and practice of the Word of God.
4. And we remember that it is but a battle, for our Lord has won the war on our behalf.

V. Conclusion.

- A. So pray for yourself and your household. Pray for those who sit here near you. Pray for your co-worker and your neighbor as well, for without Christ, they have no hope.

Benediction

May our gracious Father in heaven cause us to be found in Christ, clothed on in His righteousness which comes through faith from the hand of God. May we know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings as we become conformed to His death. Amen.