



THAT ONE SIN.

“THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST JESUS.”

ROMANS 8:1

Tonight, we'll continue in our series *Hope in God: A Study on Spiritual Depression*. Why we've chosen to study what God's Word has to say about this issue is fairly self-explanatory. I've spoken to numerous Christians in this room and in other areas of the church who would say that their lives are marked by sadness, apathy, fear, and shame. These are Christians! Brothers and sisters who claim the name of Christ, who cling to him, and yet, they are in ruts, devastating pain. A definition of spiritual depression that we'll work with is this: **a severe sadness and darkness of soul linked to a crisis of faith**. As always in this series, my aim tonight will be to direct you to Scriptures in order to determine a significant cause of spiritual depression and anxiety as well as provide its cure.

Last week, I told you that for the remainder of the series, we dedicate each sermon to studying a different cause of spiritual depression for Christians. Last week, we talked about how a misunderstanding of the basic doctrines of Christianity can cause a man or woman to spiral into fear and sadness when they are confronted with doubt. Specifically, people who continue to try to work for God's joy instead of working because of God's joy, will be riddled with sadness. But the good news of justification by faith alone is that we don't need to work for God's favor. It is ours in Christ Jesus.

Tonight, we will take our topic of last week, justification, and revisit some of its implications. The reason why this is necessary is because our topic for discussion tonight is: that one sin. We are testing the doctrine of justification's strength. Can it actually bear the weight of our sin? What about that one sin that I struggle with. These are the sins that would cause you to say, "If you only knew, then you wouldn't want me around." These are the sins that cause you to feel disgusting and disturbed. These are the sins that may be against the law, worthy of punishment by the authorities. You can't find any peace and joy in your Christianity, because you are constantly thinking of that one sin!

Most often, when I sit and talk with you, this is the struggle you have. Typically, your hang ups don't center around the small sins. Instead, your lack of joy and your fear stem from a particular part of your past. A particular thing you did once or several times that cause your joy to dry up and depression to grow in its place.

BIG IDEA:

Since there is no more condemnation for past sin,
Christians can represent Christ with joy and peace in this life,

SPIRITUAL DEPRESSION'S CAUSE: THAT ONE SIN

- Christians know that Jesus died for their sins, but they can't stop feeling guilty about this one thing.
 - You know you've sinned.
 - That particular sin deserves a punishment.
 - It disgusts you.
 - It makes you hate yourself.
 - Instead of living with joy, your life is marked by misery.
 - You think this is your punishment for that sin...
 - The depressed man or woman says, "I deserve this."
 - But you hear other Christians talk their joy, and that only compounds your misery.
 - And you want to be used by God, but don't think it's possible, which compounds the misery.

“To insist on feeling guilty is but another way of insisting on helping God with our salvation.” - NAC

APPLYING THE BASICS: 1 TIMOTHY 1:15

1. All men sinned, and needed a Savior.
2. Jesus was sent into the world for the purpose of saving sinners.

Just as a janitor knows his job is to clean the dirty and messy parts of a building, Jesus' job was to save sinners. Saving sinful people was not a surprise to him. Otherwise, there would have been absolutely no reason for Christ to earth. But he did, and the book of John tells us that his purpose was to save a people who were blind. Ephesians tells us we were dead. We followed the wicked god of this world, carrying out all our own motives and desires. Jesus' job was to save sinners.

Mark 2:15-17 – And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

2 Corinthians 5:21 – For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

1 Peter 3:18 – For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God...

3. And the worst ones were at the top of his list.
→ Consider who wrote this statement about Jesus. Paul.

Acts 7:54-8:3 – Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep. **And Saul approved of his execution.** And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. Devout men buried Stephen and made great lamentation over him. **But Saul was ravaging the church,** and entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

Galatians 1:13-14 – For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how **I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.** And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.

Acts 9:1-5 – **But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord,** went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. And falling to the ground, he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” And he said, “Who are you, Lord?” And he said, “**I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.**”

THIS IS HOPE:

1. The sin you are clinging to has been punished. (Romans 8:1)
 - It didn't go unnoticed.
 - When you feel guilty, stop, remember the cross, and move forward in sadness and acceptance.
2. You can absolutely be used by God. (1 Timothy 1:16)
 - Jesus Christ saved you to be a display of his grace!
 - Consider John Newton

“I commit my soul to my gracious God and Savior, who mercifully spared and preserved me, when I was an apostate, a blasphemer, and an infidel, and delivered me from the state of misery on the coast of Africa into which my obstinate wickedness had plunged me; and who has been pleased to admit me (though most unworthy) to preach his glorious gospel.”¹ - **John Newton**

Toward the end of his life, Newton befriended a young man in parliament named William Wilberforce. Together, they launched a plan that eradicated the English involvement in the African slave trade. Christ work in Newton’s life was so great, and his desire to serve Christ’s interests so strong, that thirty years after leaving the sea, Newton wrote an essay, *Thoughts upon the African Slave Trade*, which closed with a reference to “a commerce so iniquitous, so cruel, so oppressive, so destructive, as the African Slave Trade!”² - **John Newton**

¹ Cecil, R. (2018). *Memoirs of the Rev. John Newton.*, (Franklin Classics), 107.

² Newton, J. (1985). *The Works of the Rev. John Newton (Vol. 6): Thoughts on the African Slave Trade.*, (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust),