

Whatever Happened to Sin?

1 John 1:5-10

May 4, 2020 am

HDBC

Little boy came home from church one Sunday. Mom had not been able to attend, so she quizzed her son to make sure he was paying attention to the sermon.

What did the preacher talk about?

The little boy had not paid much attention, but he recovered quickly. ***Sin***

Well, what did he say about it?

Young boy, again was quick on his feet. ***He said God was against it!***

God has always been against sin. But what is sin? Several ways the Bible describes sin.

To ***miss the mark***, as an archer shooting an arrow at the target. Fail to measure up.

To ***twist or pervert*** that which is good. To take something good and distort it.

To ***rebel against God***. To refuse to yield to God as the authority over our lives.

To ***disobey the law of God***. To know the right thing, but do the opposite.

There are over 1200 direct references to sin in the Bible. It's a pretty big deal in the Bible and that means it's a pretty big deal to God. It shows up in the third chapter of the first book of the Bible and is mentioned in the very last chapter of the Bible. Solving the problem of sin is the theme of the entire Bible. So that begs the question . . .

Whatever happened to sin? Sin has not gone away. It is still around. But from the way it is ignored in our culture one would think that it has gone the way of the dodo bird and the dinosaurs. It's no longer around and we no longer have to worry about it. That's a problem!

Sin was not a part of God's creation but came onto the scene very early on. God created a complex universe that continues to be immeasurable. Within that complex universe He created a planet called earth. On this planet he created a beautiful garden that He called Eden. Into that garden He place the man and the woman whom He created.

He made it clear that they were in charge of the garden and the planet. There were all kinds of other things; animals, plants, minerals. The man and the woman were more important than them all. They would rule over them all, under the sovereign authority of God, Himself. It was perfect! They have everything they needed, including sweet fellowship with God.

God planted a particular tree in the garden that provided them with an important choice. He instructed them to refrain from eating the fruit of that tree. The Bible calls it ***the tree of the***

knowledge of good and evil. It was more than that. It was a **tree of choice.** It was the one thing that was forbidden. Therefore it was the one thing that could tempt them.

The Bible tells us that they disobeyed God and ate fruit from that tree. In doing so they introduced **sin** into the beautiful and perfect creation of God. They . . .

. . . missed the mark of perfection.
. . . twisted that which was good
. . . rebel against the authority of God over them
. . . disobeyed the direct commandment of God.

The sin that began with Adam and Eve has been passed down to every person in every generation. Like them, we are all sinners. We have all made the same choices that they made.

The problem with sin is that by its very nature, it wants to be ignored, denied or considered irrelevant. That was what they thought as they were being tempted to sin. It will not be a big deal. I can ignore it. Maybe it will not make that much of a difference. They failed to see just how powerful, how impactful sin could be. People are still doing the same thing.

Sin is a taboo word for many in our culture. It's fascinating to see how little the word is used today. There are all kinds of substitute words that people want to use. **Mistake. Blunder. Oversight. Error. Bad decision.** It seems like no one wants to say the word, for fear that they will have to face the truth about what it really is.

Admitting sin is only a short step away from admitting there is a God. Admitting there is a God is only a short step away from admitting I'm accountable to that God.

Well, as much as we might be tempted to think this is a modern day problem, only, this is not the case. John addressed this in 1 John. Even in his day people were trying to find ways to ignore, deny or escape the reality of sin. I'll show you what I mean. **Read 1 John 1:5-10**

John presents three things that keep people from admitting their sin. Then he offers the one solution to the problem of sin. First let's look at the things that keep people from properly dealing with sin.

1. **Darkness (5-7)**

This person has acknowledged the reality of sin and the presence of sin in his life, but declares that he is right with God and therefore doesn't have to worry about sin anymore. I have sinned, but now I'm saved. The delusion here is about salvation.

This person assumes he is saved when he clearly is not. Because assumes he is saved he has not concerned about his own sinfulness. At one time he made a declaration that he was saved and has assumed that make him immune from sin. But, John says there is a problem.

John makes simple but bold declaration that **God is light!** Note the absence of the definite article. This is a description of the nature and essence of God. The Bible also says

God is spirit . . . God is love. These are also descriptors of his nature.

Throughout the Bible God and His glory are described in terms of light. During the Exodus God appeared to the Hebrews in the form of light. When Moses came off the mountain after meeting with God, his face glowed with light. In Psalms God is described as being clothed in light. At the transfiguration of Jesus His glory shined through as light.

The Bible also links light with virtue and moral conduct. In this passage, walking in light refers to walking in right living, doing the right things. Or to use the negative, ***not sinning***.

So, note the problem. This person claims to be in fellowship with God (be in a right relationship with God) but walks in sin. John says this cannot be. God is light and there is no darkness (sin) in Him. One cannot walk in sin and be in fellowship with the light at the same time. This person is not worrying about his own sin because he assumes he is right with God.

But note verse 7. The person who is truly born again, walks in the light. Now, this does not mean we never sin. The rest of this passage makes it clear that we do. John is describing a person who claims to be a Christian but completely lives the life of one who is not a Christian. He is describing a lifestyle of sin. ***Walking*** – speaks of lifestyle.

Make all kinds of excuses for their sin.

I'm only human.

I sin, but not more than anyone else.

I was baptized as a kid, so I'm ok.

I don't want to be a fanatic!

I believe have known many people who think they are right with God when they are not. That may sound like I'm judging. I'm not. I would be judging if I made an absolute declaration that a person is lost. But I'm saying the fruit of many people's lives makes me question their salvation. Claiming to be saved, but walking in sin! That's a problem!

2. Deception (8)

Once again there is a self-declaration that is untrue and harmful. ***If we say that we have no sin***. Note the present tense. This person claims to have reached a point in life where he no longer sins. He is above it. He has reached state of sinless perfection.

Anyone who ignores the reality that we still sin is clearly not walking in the truth. The Bible repeatedly reminds us of the presence of sin in and around us. This person is deceived by pride. **Jesus** was the only person who could claim to be without sin. Anyone who makes such a claim is being deceived.

There was a teacher of a children's small group who was teaching the story of the Pharisee and the tax-collector. Tax-collectors were consider really bad sinners. The pharisee looked down on the tax-collector and that he was so much better because he was not a ***sinner*** like

the tax-collector. The point of the story is that the pharisee was showing that he was more of a sinner because of his attitude. He had deceived himself into thinking that he was not really a sinner. After teaching the story the teacher said to the children, *Now aren't you glad we are not like that pharisee!* Essentially acting just like the pharisee.

3. Defiance (10)

The first ignored sin because of darkness.

The second ignored sin because of deception.

This one ignores sin out of defiance. This person is defying the truth that God has clearly revealed in His word and in that person's conscience. Note the past tense. This person claims to have never had a problem with sin. **This is a greater statement of arrogance.** Rejection of general revelation of our sinfulness and guilt.

This person is defying God (calling Him a liar) on two levels.

1) Theological level. God has said in his word we are all sinners.

2) Personal level. God had brought conviction to this person. He rejects it. When he senses God convicting him of sin, his mental response is ***no, that can't be true. I have not sinned.***

So, John offers three answers to the question ***Whatever happened to sin?***

Darkness – Some are just walking in darkness but think they are right with God.

Deception – Some are arrogantly assuming they have risen above sin.

Defiance – Some are boldly defying that they ever had a problem with sin.

People in all three categories are lost and will stay that way until something changes.

The solution is verse 9.

4. Confession (9)

The real solution is to call sin what it is, sin! To admit that you are a sinner. Ask Jesus to forgive your sin, based on His payment for your sin

Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He made it very clear that those who think they have no problem, who think they need no salvation will not find forgiveness. Confession is the front door of salvation, from our perspective. However, this is not just dealing with the confession that leads to salvation. The verb is in the present tense, which means continual action. We are to go on confessing our sins.

How often should I confess my sin? The answer is **as often as I sin!** We do this not to maintain our salvation, for that is absolutely safe and secure in Christ. This is to keep our fellowship right with God.

Fellowship and relationship are not the same thing. I have a family relationship with my daughters. Nothing and I mean nothing can change that. But our fellowship can be

impacted by their actions or mine. The ongoing confession of our sins is to keep the fellowship sweet and good, knowing that the relationship is permanently secure.

Takeaways:

- 1. We are all sinners by nature and practice. Admit it!**
Without this confession you cannot be forgiven or saved.
- 2. Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins. Believe it!**
This is how we receive complete forgiveness, and escape eternal penalty for our sins.
- 3. We are called to holy living. Embrace it!**
We are to walk in the light, even as God is light.
- 4. We are still tempted to sin. Resist it!**
We are not yet free from the power and persuasion of sin.
- 5. We sometimes give in to sin. Confess it!**
There are times when we fail. When we do, we must confess our sins to Christ.