

Week 3 - Man the Sinner

Intro Question 1 - What is sin?

The word the Bible uses for 'sin' literally means 'missing the mark.' God has a standard of holiness and we have failed to hit that standard. But the way the Bible views sin is far deeper than our being 'a little bit off.' The Bible describes sin as willful rebellion against the authority of God. Greg Gilbert says we are not just missing the mark a little bit. We are shooting in the opposite direction of the target.

Question 1 - What are some consequences of Adam and Eve's sin?

"They themselves were cast out of the idyllic garden of Eden. No longer would the earth willingly and joyfully present its fruits and treasures to them. They would have to work hard and painfully to get them. Even worse, God executed the promised sentence of death upon them. Their fellowship with God was broken, and thus their hearts shriveled, their minds filled up with selfish thoughts, and their eyes darkened to the beauty of God, and their souls became utterly void of that spiritual life that God gave them in the beginning when everything was good." (Greg Gilbert, *What Is the Gospel?* pg.50)

Question 2 - Does it make sense with your experience of others that "human beings are fundamentally sinful and rebellious"? Why or why not? What about in your own mind and heart?

It is popular to think of people as generally good, with some sinful exceptions. But if we honestly consider our own hearts and the state of the world around us, we will see sin everywhere. Even many of the good deeds done in our world have sinful motives and come from rebellious hearts. We have to understand this to see why what Jesus did is so important.

Question 3 - Why would a weak doctrine of sin diminish our appreciation for what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross?

If we think of sin as anything less than rebellion against a holy God, we minimize the penalty that our sin would demand. If we think less of the penalty we deserve, then we think less of the penalty that Jesus took on our behalf. We have to understand that Jesus bore the wrath of a holy God against open rebellion for us.

Question 4 - According to non-Christians you know, what is humanity's main problem?

According to the Bible, what is humanity's main problem?

People may point to issues like mental health, negative thinking, bad influences, and other things as our main problem. According to the Bible our main problem is that we have sinned and stand as enemies of our Creator. All of the problems in the world stem from humanity's rebellion and they will only be solved through the gospel of Jesus.

Question 5 - Why would you want to make hell sound more agreeable when sharing the gospel?

In what ways have you tried (or been tempted) to do this?

When we want to make hell sound less horrific, we are usually very concerned with how we are perceived in other peoples' eyes. We can be tempted to do this by not talking about hell's eternity, not talking about suffering, or not sharing that hell is an active judgment from God Himself. When we do this, we weaken the truth of how desperately we need a Savior and we remove the urgency of repentance.