

Session 2: The Advantages of Remaining Sin

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1 Thess. 5:14 We urge you, brothers, confront the idle, encourage the fainthearted, hold on to the weak, be patient with them all.

I. God is powerful over all his creation (sovereign)

- A. Knows all things
- B. God always gets his way
- C. Psalm 139
- D. Daniel 2:20-22
- E. Matthew 10:29-30

II. God hates sin

- A. He never sins
- B. He never tempts anyone to sin
- C. James 1:13-15
- D. God uses human sin
 - 1. Job
 - 2. Joseph
 - 3. Acts 2:23
 - 4. I Samuel 19:9

III. God could have made us perfect at salvation

- A. New creation - Old sinful flesh
- B. The daily battle
- C. God does all things for his glory and our good
- D. Shall we keep on sinning so grace will abound? NO!
- E. We are called to try hard to obey
- F. We are told we are very weak and will fail often
- G. All our obedience is tainted by our fallen nature
- H. Small beginnings

IV. Biblical examples

- A. King David and Psalm 51
- B. Peter's denial of Christ, Luke 22
- C. Paul's thorn in the flesh, 2 Cor. 12:6 onward, Rom. 7:14-25

V. The work of the Holy Spirit

- A. The tool kit concept
- B. No choice but to change
- C. Grace to stand
- D. Grace to fall
- E. WCF quotes (see below)

VI. How can sin be good for us and glorify God?

- A. reveals God's character
- B. shows our desperate need
- C. help for relentless glory stealers
- D. creates humility and dependence
- E. helps us to see God's hand at work
- F. worship and gratitude
- G. repentance and confession
- H. points us to Christ, our only hope
- I. leads us to gratitude and worship
- J. causes us to long for heaven

VII. Adjusted expectations

- A. He has begun a good work
- B. He will finish the work
- C. Growth is slow and according to His agenda (Mark 4:28)
- D. Sometimes God won't answer your good prayers
- E. He humbles us with our failures
- F. Makes Christ precious to us

VIII. The outrageous and extravagant grace of God in Christ

- A. It is finished!
- B. He cannot be stopped

IX. The party starts now!

- A. Learning to celebrate the righteousness of Christ
- B. 2 Cor. 5:16-21, Romans 3:20-23, Zechariah 3:1-5
- C. Specific Examples

X. A life of sorrowing and rejoicing

- A. Living before the face of God in real time
- B. The melody and harmony of life

But, O the comfort! We are not under law but under grace. The gospel is a dispensation for sinners, and we have an Advocate with the Father. *There* is the unshaken ground of hope. A reconciled Father, a prevailing Advocate, a powerful Shepherd, a compassionate Friend, a Savior who is able and willing to save to the uttermost. He knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust; and has opened for us a new and blood-besprinkled way of access to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in ever time of need.

Westminster Confession of Faith:

WCF 16.3: Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And that they must be enabled thereunto, beside the graces they have already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit, to work in them to will and to do, of his good pleasure: yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit; but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

WCF 5.5: The most wise, righteous, and gracious God often leaves, for a season, his own children to various temptations, and the corruptions of their own hearts, to chastise them for former sins, or to reveal to them the hidden strength of corruption and deceitfulness of their hearts, so that they may be humbled; and, to raise them to a more close and constant dependence for their support upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for various other just and holy ends.

Continual Repentance

(Adapted from The Valley of Vision)

*O God of Grace,
You have imputed my sin to my substitute,
and have imputed his righteousness to my soul,
clothing me with a bridegroom's robe,
decking me with jewels of holiness.*

*But in my Christian walk I am still in rags;
my best prayers are stained with sin;
my penitential tears are so much impurity;
my confessions of wrong are so many aggravations of sin;
my receiving the Spirit is tinctured with selfishness.*

*I need to repent of my repentance;
I need my tears to be washed;
I have no robe to bring to cover my sins,
no loom to weave my own righteousness;
I am always standing clothed in filthy garments,
and by grace am always receiving change of raiment,
for you always justify the ungodly;
I am always going into the far country,
and always returning home as a prodigal,
always saying, "Father, forgive me,"
and you are always bringing forth the best robe.*

*Every morning let me wear it,
every evening return in it,
go out to the day's work in it,
be married in it,
be wound in death in it,
stand before the great white throne in it,
enter heaven in it shining as the sun.*

*Grant me never to lose sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin,
the exceeding righteousness of salvation,
the exceeding glory of Christ,
the exceeding beauty of holiness,
the exceeding wonder of grace.
Amen.*