

The Word of God and Sin

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I.

WE BEGIN today a series of messages on the subject, THE WORD OF GOD AND SIN. We purpose, by God's grace under the leading of the Holy Spirit, to show from the Word of God what the Scriptures teach about sin: that it is basically rebellion against God, that it is contrary to the nature of God, separates from God, calls down the wrath of God upon sinful man and necessitates the blood-shedding of God Himself in the Person of His Son if it is to ever be put away from the holy eyes of a holy God for His people.

Only the man who is a fool will close his eyes to the fact that the taproot, the basis for our rebellious society, our broken homes, our disobedient children, our God-hating parents, our craze for lust, sex, liquor, dope, laziness, and idleness is sin—*SIN*. Yes, sin is man's greatest problem. Dear friend, face the fact of sin, confess it, repent of it, turn from it, and in faith turn to God's Substitute for sinners, the Lord Jesus Christ, and you have solved every problem that besets you on every hand.

Let us face it fairly and squarely: the taproot of all the trouble in our schools today is *sin*—rebellion against God. The taproot of all the trouble in our government today is *sin*—rebellion against God and the authority of His Word. All of the ills in our sick society is traced to the taproot of *sin*—rebellion against God and the authority of His Word. The taproot of all our neurotic problems that are filling our jails, hospitals and mental institutions is *sin*—rebellion against God and the authority of His Word.

THE WORD OF GOD DECLARES in Jer. 17:9 that the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: therefore at the seat of your affections, your desires, your motives, is the taproot of sin, which is rebellion against God and His authority. This means that from within your desperately wicked self comes the cry, "I am going to have the right to my life, to do as I please, and nobody,—I mean nobody: God or man, church or home, government or courts—will tell me what to do." This, my friend, is the essence of sin: the right to myself and let God keep His hands off, I don't need Him. This, according to God's Word, is what is wrong in our society today—rebellion against God and the authority of His Word.

THE WORD OF GOD DECLARES in Rom. 8:7 that the "carnal [or fleshly] mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." This is the essence of sin: the whole mind, the whole heart, the whole will of man is set in active rebellion against God. This being so, then the Word of God expresses this enmity and acts of hostility as walking contrary to God (Lev. 26:21), as rebellion against God (Isa. 1:2), as rising up against God as an enemy (Micah 2:8), as striving and contending with God (Isa. 45:9), and as despising God (Num. 11:20). Also being in this state of active rebellion against God makes men haters of God (Rom. 1:30), resistors of God (Acts 7:51), fighters against God (Acts 5:39), even blasphemers of God, and in short, atheists who say there is no God (Psa. 14:1).

THE WORD OF GOD DECLARES in I John 3:4 that sin is the transgression of the law of God. This Holy Law of God contained in the Ten Commandments, the Ten Words from Sinai (Ex. 20), shows us the mind of that Holy and Glorious Being Who is the God of this universe, the Creator of every creature, "...the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting" (I Tim. 6:15-16). This Holy Law of God commands us to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our strength, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. This shows us then that the Holy Law of God is something not only to keep outwardly, but to love inwardly, for our Holy God requires truth in the inward parts. This being so, then the least deviation from this Holy Law of God, in thought, word or deed is—in the light of God according to James 2:10—a breaking

of the whole Law of God bringing us on a collision course with a sin-hating, sin-abhorring, sin-punishing God Whom we must meet either in mercy or judgment.

This brings us then to see THE WICKED NATURE OF SIN, that it is contrary to the Holy nature of God, for Holiness is the very nature of our Living God—"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5). Yes, He is holy, without spot or blemish or any such thing. He is so holy that He cannot sin Himself, nor is He the cause or author of sin in anyone else. He does not command sin to be committed; for to do so would be contrary to His nature and will. He cannot and does not approve any man's sin when it is committed, but He hates it with a perfect hatred. The Holy God of the Bible is without iniquity, and of purer eyes than to behold or approve of sin (Hab. 1:13).

On the contrary, as God is holy—so, sin is sinful, altogether sinful, and always sinful (Gen. 6:5). The Word of God declares in Rom. 7:18 that in my sinful, corrupt nature, there dwelleth no good thing. As in God there is no evil, so in sin there is no good. God is the Chiefest of goods and sin is the chiefest of evils. As no good can be compared with God for goodness, so no evil can be compared with sin for evil. Yes, sin is against the very nature of God and His holiness; therefore He hates it, therefore He must punish it, therefore He must put it out of His sight forever. Also apart from the blood-sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, God cannot deal with sinful man except to cast him out of His presence forever in the lake of fire which is the second death.

Listen to me! God's Word does not deal with sin lightly. Plainly upon its pages it tells us of the consequences of sin, its result, its effect and its end. Rom. 6:23 tells us that the wages that sin pays is spiritual and eternal death, separation from a Holy God. Rom. 5:12 tell us that by one sin, one man's sin (pride or disobedience) that death, physical death, passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Rom. 3:23 tells us that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Isa. 59:1-2 tells us that sin has separated us from God and has made fellowship impossible with Him apart from the atoning work of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen as we go further and show you how that *for one sin*, sinners have been cut off from God. Oh listen and may God by His Spirit give you a hatred for sin, an alarm in your soul about sin, a cry unto God against sin and a turning unto God in Christ for the remission of sin. Oh that you would cry after Him to have mercy upon you in Christ so that you would not sin the sin unto death.

For one sin, the sin of disobedience, Adam threw the whole human race into chaos and confusion (Gen.3;Rom.5). From Adam we received our sinful, totally depraved nature. For one sin,—sodomy—Ham brought the curse of God down upon his posterity (Gen. 9). For one sin—unbelief—Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt (Gen. 19). For one sin—rebellion—Korah and his crowd were swallowed up by the opened earth and went down quickly into the pit alive (Num. 16). For one sin—anger—Moses was kept out of the promised land (Num. 20). For one sin—covetousness that led to stealing—Achan and all his family was stoned (Josh. 7). For one sin—rebellion—King Saul was rejected and the Lord left him forever (I Sam. 15). For one sin—covetousness that led to lying to the Holy Spirit—Ananias and Sapphira were stricken dead by the power of God (Acts 5). On and on the Scriptures go to tell us that God does not deal lightly with sin. He will and does smite sin where He finds it, even when He found it upon His only Son upon the cross. God must and He did pour out wave after wave of His wrath upon Him, for Christ had undertaken to bear the sins of His people.

Then should you think lightly of sin? With the sword of God's justice hanging over you, should you make a mock of sin? Should you be happy-go-lucky? Should you make mirth? No, my friend, it is only the patience and long-suffering of God that has kept Him from already casting you into hell. Rom. 2:4 asks the question, "Despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Yes, it has only been the goodness of God that you are not already destroyed for the very same sins that others have committed and were slain. But be sure your sins will find you out; though the wheels of God's justice grind slowly, they do grind, and someday, if the

goodness and kindness of God does not lead you to repentance, then surely God will say, “Tonight your soul shall be required of you, come and give an account of your sins.” Then how will you stand?

Remember every man stands before God and is to be judged on the basis of his own sins. There will be no excuses, no blaming others then, no place to hide then, for Rev. 20:11 shows that awful day of judgment and A Great White Throne will be set, and Christ will sit upon it, from Whose face the earth and the heaven will flee away, and there you will find no place to hide. It says, “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God”—yes, you will be there—“and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Yes, you will be there—“and the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, and whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

This then is the consequence and final end of all sin, *The Second Death*, the lake of fire, separation from God forever. Therefore knowing the terror of the Lord, let me persuade you—“Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon” (Isa. 55:6-7).

You see, dear friend, God in his *everlasting love* has made a way that He can be just in justifying you because He has dealt with sin in Jesus Christ upon the cross. In His mercy He has provided a Substitute for poor sinners in His Son. The Lord Jesus Christ came in our nature, born of a woman, made in the likeness of sinful flesh that He might take His perfect, sinless body and nail it to the cross so that He might die beneath the sins of His people and bear the eternal wrath of God in their place. This is the good news of the Gospel: that you, the sinner, may have eternal life in Christ. He shed His precious blood so that your sin may be washed away and you will be able to stand before God, clothed in His righteousness, and cleansed from all your sins.

I say then, the conditions of such a gracious salvation are laid down in God’s precious Word; they are *repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*, God’s Son, Who suffered and bled and died and rose again for your salvation.

In repentance you will take God’s side against yourself. You will acknowledge that you are guilty of breaking God’s holy Law, you will acknowledge God’s justice in sending you to hell. You will confess that you are wrong and God is right; you will change your mind about sin; you will hate it, abhor it, turn from it, and resolve never to go back to it again.

In faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ you will, as a lost, helpless sinner, cast yourself upon Him to save, keep and provide for you all the days of your life; you will trust Him, believing His Word is true and that in Him you have a perfect and complete salvation because the Lord Jesus has already finished the work of your eternal salvation and there remains no more to be done.

Like John the Baptist, I say to you: Flee from the wrath to come; flee to Christ Who stands with open arms to receive you.

II.

We desire, by the grace of God, to continue our subject today under the heading: THE EFFECTS OF SIN UPON THE HUMAN RACE. I know that our generation has just about done away with the knowledge of sin and has relegated it to the dark ages, calling those who preach on sin and against sin puritanical, old fashioned and behind the times; but my Bible tells me in Isa. 58:1 to “cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgressions.” Yes, I am to declare God’s eternal Word and lay out before you that you are a sinner, a sinner by nature, a sinner by practice and a sinner that lies beneath the

awful wrath of a sin-avenging God; a God Who hates sin and is of purer eyes than to behold it unless you be found in the Lord Jesus Christ, God's only hiding place from His wrath.

The Bible, God's eternal, unbroken, unchanging Word, shows us the awful effect of sin upon man as it pictures him in the state of total depravity. The Bible pictures him as carnal, fleshly, sold under sin, and therefore in himself there is no way back to a holy and righteous God.

Listen now as we go into this today! This word "DEPRAVITY" refers to the mental and moral being of man. By "TOTAL depravity" is meant that every part of man's mental and moral nature is corrupted and therefore he is a creature void of any righteousness or goodness that God will accept as a standing before Him. Rom. 3:10-12 tells us: "There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Therefore depravity must be total; for all those mysterious intangibles of man's spiritual nature not only live inseparably with each other, but they live within each other, altogether constituting one indivisible thinking mind made up of intellect, volition, emotions, instinct, desire, motive, urge, disposition and temper. All of these were depraved by the fall of Adam, therefore the fall of man was TOTAL; and man who is this thinking creature stands before God, ruined, lost, helpless and hopeless in sin. This is the Bible's picture of man and the effect of sin upon him.

Sin then in the Scriptures is described as **blindness** (Eph. 4:18), for sin has blinded the eyes of man's understanding so that he cannot see the danger he is in nor the beauty of the Deliverer Whom God has set forth in the Lord Jesus Christ. Sin is described in Acts 28:27 as **deafness**, for sin has deafened man's hearing so that he cannot hear God calling him to come to Him in repentance and faith. Sin is described in Titus 1:15 as **defilement**, for sin has defiled man's mind and polluted his imaginations so that he cannot appreciate Divine things. Sin is described in I Cor. 15:33 as **corruption**, for sin has corrupted man's heart so that he has no love for God and no desire for the things of God. You see, dear friend, God's Word pictures man as a moral pervert, debased, evil and rotten because of sin and hatred of God, His Law, His Word, and His Christ. Again sin is described in Eph. 4:19 as **paralysis**, for sin has paralyzed man's will so that he has no power to raise himself from the helpless position he is in; and no moral force to enable him to walk in the ways of God. My dear friend, this is not my description of sin, but God's description; for we read in Rom. 5:6, "For when we were yet *without strength*, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." You see, every sinner is without strength, dead in trespasses and sin, alienated from the life of God; and must be made willing in the day of God's power by His Holy Spirit if he is ever to savingly lay hold of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Also I will go further: Every sinner whom God has ever saved has, to a greater or lesser degree, *felt in his own soul the helplessness and hopelessness of his ruined condition before God*; and if he was ever saved it had to be by a power greater than himself because he lies paralyzed in sin. His cry is: "Lord save or I perish, God be merciful to me the sinner; Lord deliver, Lord help, Lord have mercy or I'm gone forever for I cannot save myself; help me, Lord, or I shall forever abide under Your just wrath."

Yes, the Holy Spirit by the Law of God works in us the exceeding sinfulness of sin and makes us cry out: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24)

Again, sin is described in the Word of God in Isa. 59:1-2 as **separation**, for sin has separated man's soul from God so that he is dead in sins; yes, separated from the life of God, having no hope in this life nor the one to come. This being so, then only in the Lord Jesus Christ can we be reconciled back to God. Only as the Holy Spirit works in our hearts by the sword of His Word can we cease from sin, turn our back upon it, come to hate it, flee from it and flee to God in Christ from the wrath to come.

Again, sin in the Scriptures is described in I Sam. 15:23 as **rebellion**, for sin has filled man's mind with rebellion so that he is said to be carnal and enmity against God. This being so, then in every heart of every human being there lies that strong, settled feeling of hatred against God, whether it is concealed, displayed or latent. It lies there, seemingly hidden, but will always rise up when God crosses your will at your pet sin

with His authority. Yes, man is a rebel by nature; we hate authority. Children hate the authority of the parents; wives hate the authority of the husbands; husbands hate the authority of Christ. Every man in some way and at some time hates the authority of the laws of the land. Man by nature is an anarchist; he hates all authority. So when it comes to the authority of God's Word, you hate it. And why do you hate God's Word? because in it you are told what to do, how to live, how to speak, how to worship, how to pray, how to give, how to dress, whom to associate with, whom to marry, how you are to use your time, money and possessions. But you do not want to be told what to do because you are a rebel at heart.

This is the reason God *must* give you a new heart and a new nature in salvation or you would continue in your state of rebellion. And, my friend, this is the reason that the vast majority of Christendom today is *not saved*: it is because they have never been brought to the place of repentance toward God, laying down their arms of rebellion. They do not have a new heart, for if they did, they would hear God's Word and bow to His authority.

Our Blessed Lord put it in these words in John 8:47, "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not because ye are not of God." Listen my friend, you will bow to the authority of God's Word or go to hell. We will bow to the authority of God's Holy Law in Christ, or forever perish in the lake of fire which is the second death. But if God by His Spirit does not put forth His power to break our hearts and give us a heart of obedience to His authority, we will all die in our rebellion and forever lie beneath His wrath.

The Apostle Paul tells us in Rom. 7 that when he was under Holy Spirit conviction that he came to see the Law of God as being holy, just and good, and that God would be just in sending him to hell for not keeping it. He saw that the Law of God was spiritual, that it entered into the heart of man and convicted him of his very thoughts; and when he saw this he was made to cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He delighted in the law of God after the inward man, but how to keep it he knew not; for he had not the power nor the strength to keep his thoughts and to put into action that which the Law demanded.

And what did the Law demand of Brother Paul, and in the same manner of you and I? Truth! Yes, truth in the inward parts; and he found no power in himself to keep it, to produce truth in himself. Acts 9 tells us that when he was stricken under conviction on the road to Damascus, that he trembled and was astonished as he had to face a Holy God. In Judas' house on Straight Street in Damascus he was shut up in blindness; he neither did eat nor drink as his sin lay heavy upon him, and his heart broke forth into lust, rebellion, bitterness and hell itself as he came face to face with the Holy Law of God which he could not keep. He says of himself in Rom. 7:9, "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, *sin revived, and I died.*" Sin became exceeding sinful as he saw his ruined condition before that Holy and Righteous God against Whom he had sinned all the days of his life. Yes, he was made to confess that he was the very chief of sinners, a blasphemer, a persecutor, an injurious man, a man filled with pride and self-righteousness; but oh hear him describe it in his letter to Brother Timothy in I Tim. 1:14—"And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." And then he says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

Oh, my dear friend, did you ever experience this conviction of sin before God wherein you took all the blame for your sin, laid down the arms of your rebellion and stood a naked, guilty soul before God and His broken Law? Did you, like the Apostle Paul as he tells us in Phil. 3, count all things loss for Christ that you might have Christ and His righteousness as your only hope and standing before God? I ask you: Did you have a Pauline conversion? Were you saved like the Apostle Paul was saved? I ask you again in all sincerity of soul: Did you have a Pauline conversion? If not, you are not saved! You are lost and yet in your sins; for every saved soul has a Pauline conversion.

I hear someone say, "But Pastor, that's a bold statement! What strong language!" Yes, but its Scriptural! In I Tim. 1:16 we hear the Apostle Paul saying, "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a *pattern* to them which should hereafter believe on him to life

everlasting.” Paul said he was saved for a *pattern*, an example, an illustration of how God would save poor sinners. Therefore each one whom God saves will have, to a greater or lesser degree, *the same repentance and faith* as exercised by the apostle. He will be slain by that Law and stand guilty before God crying for mercy upon the basis of the shed-blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will cry after Christ; he will count all things loss for Christ; he will give up his dreams, his plans, his ambitions, yes even the world, that he might know the Lord Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior, Deliverer and Lover of his soul. His cry will be:

Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly.
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high!

Hide me, O my Saviour, hide
Till the storm of life is past:
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none,
Hangs my helpless soul on Thee:
Leave, oh, leave me not alone,
Still support and comfort me!

All my trust on Thee is stayed.
All my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenseless head,
With the shadow of Thy wing.

Thou, O Christ, art all I want,
More than all in Thee I find;
Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
Heal the sick and lead the blind.

Just and holy is Thy name,
I am all unrighteousness;
False and full of sin I am,
Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with Thee is found,
Grace to cover all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within.

Thou of life the fountain art,
Freely let me take of thee:
Spring Thou up within my heart,
Rise to all eternity.

III.

Let us continue our study on THE WORD OF GOD AND SIN under the heading of THE EFFECT OF SIN UPON THE HUMAN RACE. In Rom. 3:23 we read, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” If this is so, and it is, then the questions are: How ruined is the sinner? How deep is he in sin? How does the Word of God describe each man, woman, young person, and child by nature? How does God see each soul out of Christ? What condition does He view them in? How does the Bible describe the sinful heart of man?

We answer these questions by saying that the Word of God teaches that the effect of sin upon man has been that he is by nature a *totally depraved* sinner, nothing but sin, helplessly lost, abiding under the just wrath of a sin-hating God. The Word of God does not try to minimize, gloss over, or deny the awful ruined condition of every soul outside of Christ. The Bible so pictures the effect of sin upon man that for him to ever be saved and spend eternity in a state of holiness, he must be saved by *grace and grace alone*; and this must be worked in him by the power of God's Holy Spirit and by His power alone, as He operates upon the soul by His Word. Also it declares that for a soul to be saved, that soul must be redeemed by the precious blood of Christ Who shed His precious blood as the appointed Substitute for sinners. My dear friend, there can be no salvation apart from substitution: God in the Person of His Son, dying in our place; for only sinless blood can satisfy a Holy God, and only the Lord Jesus Christ had sinless blood.

To the Law and to the Testimony then. We look into what the Scriptures teach concerning sin and its effect upon man. In Eph. 2:1 we read, "And you hath he quickened [that is, made alive] who were dead in trespasses and sins." This is where Scripture declares us to be by nature, spiritually dead. It is not physical death spoken of here, although that is caused in the last analysis by sin; but it is spiritual death spoken of, the state of separation from God and His life. This state of spiritual death is here linked with trespasses and sins because it has to do with the moral and ethical part of the individual, that is, his understanding, his affections and his will. Since the unsaved soul is living in a state of separation from God and His life, then his understanding, his affections and his will are not energized and controlled by God. We know that they are energized by his totally depraved nature and therefore controlled by Satan, as the Word plainly declares in John 8:44, "Ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father ye will do."

My dear friend, will you listen attentively as we go into our subject further? Man was placed by his Creator in the Garden of Eden as a physically, morally, spiritually and intellectually perfect man. But by his fall through sin, *every faculty* of his being has become depraved. Therefore, the Scriptures teach that man is a *totally* depraved human being, totally corrupt by nature and spiritually dead.

Listen further! When we say that a man is totally depraved, we do not mean that he is devoid of conscience, for most men are not. We do not mean that he is devoid of all qualities that are pleasing to men, for most have some qualities that are pleasing. Neither do we declare that man is as corrupt as he might be, for in his soul, apart from the grace of God, he can commit the most hellish crimes that man can think of. Neither do we declare that man is as corrupt as the devil, for the Scriptures speak of him as being the prince of devils, the prince of sinners. Are we not seeing this so vividly portrayed today in our sin-sick society? Read your newspapers and daily they will reveal the depravity of man in his hellish crimes of rape, murder, incest, and torture brought on by demon controlled minds.

I hear someone asking the question, "Then Pastor, what do you mean when you say the Scriptures teach that the effect of sin upon man was to make him totally depraved?" Listen and I will show you! We declare that the Scriptures teach that *every part* of man is in a deteriorated state, that every faculty of his being is twisted, perverted, and poisoned by sin, that he is destitute of the love of God, has an abhorrence of God which becomes active enmity or rebellion as soon as God's will comes into conflict with his own, and that he is subject to a law of constant progress in depravity. This we are told in these words in II Tim. 3:13, that "...evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived."

Now, I know that this is not popular preaching; for no man loves to be told that he is a sinner, that every part of his being is in a deteriorated state because of sin, and that he has no spiritual righteousness or spiritual goodness that God will acknowledge. But I do know this: that every soul hearing this message who has ever been saved by the grace of God, came to see and acknowledge before God that he was a depraved sinner, a helpless sinner, a hell-deserving sinner who had nothing to present to God but sin. He was spiritually bankrupt and had no money to buy with in the market of salvation. You see, dear friend, Christ came to seek and to save only lost sinners. He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. You see, He is a friend of sinners, for "God commendeth His love toward us: in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

God's Word pictures all men to be sinners: presidents, kings, governors, teachers, laborers, slaves, ministers and priests; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Whether a man be rich or poor, ignorant or learned, in the gutter or in the pew, the Word of God pictures us all to be sinners, depraved sinners, lost sinners, condemned sinners, sinners having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God because of the blindness of our hearts (Eph. 4:18). Yes, the Scriptures picture you and I by nature as being sinners who have no righteousness (Rom. 3:10); sinners who do not seek God, who are all gone out of the way, who are unprofitable (Rom. 3:11-12); sinners whose throats are open sepulchres; sinners whose tongues are used for deceit; sinners who have the poison of asps under our lips; sinners whose mouth is nothing but cursing and bitterness; sinners whose feet are swift to shed blood; sinners who have nothing but destruction and misery in our ways; sinners who have not known the way of peace and sinners who have no fear of God before our eyes. All of these descriptions are found in Rom. 3:10-18. This is not a beautiful picture is it? This does not give us any ground for boasting does it? We have here what Isa. 1:6 describes as man being one putrefying sore, uncovered before God. "The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it: but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment."

Still not a beautiful picture is it? But this is the true picture which the Scriptures paint of you and I in our totally depraved condition?

But this is not all—Did I hear someone say, "Pastor, do you mean to tell me that God's Word pictures man in yet a more sinful state?" Yes, II Cor. 4:3-4 tells us that *man's spiritual eyes are blinded* so that he cannot see any beauty or glory in Christ. John 3:19 tells us that man's affections are prostituted so that he does not love God, but hates Him without cause; yes, he is a lover of darkness rather than light, because his deeds are evil. But the greatest liability of them all is what John 5:40 tells us, that man's will is depraved, for we read, "Ye *will not* come to me that you might have life." Why? because man's *understanding is darkened* and he does not know the awful danger of sin. Again his affections are prostituted so he sees no beauty in Christ that he should desire Him. Then because the depraved will cannot act upon its own volition to go out to Christ in a wise decision, it must choose sin and hell every time because the darkened understanding and prostituted affections govern it.

Yes, this is the awful effect of sin upon man; he is helpless to choose God and wills not to repent because his *will is depraved*. Apart from the work of God the Holy Spirit in his heart, **NO MAN HAS THE ABILITY TO COME TO GOD**. For how can a dead man repent? How can a dead man believe? How can a dead man seek? How can a dead man come? He cannot apart from the grace of God working in his heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. Salvation, my friend, is **OF THE LORD**, and I praise Him that it is; for without His power, His grace, His Word, His blood and His righteousness, none of us would be saved.

Listen! I hear someone asking, "Pastor, do you yourself know anything about what you are preaching today? Are you just preaching down at us from your ivory tower and calling us sinners and do not know what you are talking about?" I believe that is a fair question. Yes, my dear friend, I can tell you from the depths of my heart that by God's grace I have been taught by the Holy Spirit that God's Word is true. I came to see by the illuminating light of God's Word in the hands of the Holy Spirit that I stood before God naked, guilty, full of pride, rebellion, lust, bitterness, and covetousness. I was made to see my far distance from a holy God, and I came to abhor myself, to hate myself before God as I saw what my sins had done to Him as He had to look upon such a heart as mine. Yes, my friend, I agree, it is not a pretty sight to look upon; but when the Holy Spirit turns the search-light of His Word upon your heart and begins to lay bare your heart and to make it manifest to you, I know there will go up a cry, a cry you cannot help uttering: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

I praise God for awakening me; I praise God for convicting me; I praise God for enabling me to repent; I praise God for giving me faith to lay hold of Christ. This is the reason awakened sinners mourn over sin as they see the loathsomeness of it; this is the reason sinners must cry out like Job when they hear of the sinner's Friend, the Lord Jesus Christ, "O that I knew where I might find Him!" This is the reason why

sinners must leave all to follow Christ; this is the reason sinners leave houses, land, jobs, homes, friends and loved ones: because they must have the only One Who can rid them of the plague of their hearts which is SIN. Yes, they must have Christ, at any cost. My friend, have you experienced this in your own soul? I praise God that by His Spirit He has worked in mine.

Yes, as the Holy Spirit works in the heart of the totally depraved sinner—and He must work or the work is never done—He gives that sinner a hatred for sin, a desire to flee from sin, a desire to be through with sin, and a seeking desire after Christ, Who is set before the sinner in Scriptures as his Friend, Savior and Deliverer. He hears that Christ is able to save him to the uttermost, take away his burden of sin, set him free from sin, give him a new heart and nature and make him a child of the Living God.

This is the reason then, my friend, the Lord Jesus Christ is precious to every soul whom He saves.

I close with these questions: Have you ever seen yourself as a depraved, lost sinner? Have you ever mourned over sin and your far distance from God? Have you ever repented of sin? Have you ever, by the power of God's Spirit, looked to Christ by faith and saw in Him a beauty and a glory that made you desire Him above all things, and did you follow Him; and are you following Him today?

IV.

Let's continue our study on THE WORD OF GOD AND SIN as we are now under the heading: THE EFFECT OF SIN UPON THE HUMAN RACE. I pray that you will listen as we go into this subject, showing you from God's Holy Word the effect of sin upon your heart and mine.

Let us approach our subject in this manner: that this doctrine of *sin* and its effect upon you and I and the whole human race is a most **solemn** one. For as no heart can sufficiently conceive, so no tongue can adequately express, the state of wretchedness and ruin into which sin has cast guilty, miserable man. In separating us from God, it has severed us from the only source of all happiness and holiness. It has ruined us body and soul, for it has filled the body with sickness and disease; and in the soul the image of God has been defaced and destroyed. It has made you and I a lover of sin and hater of God. Yes, as we view sin in the light of God's Word and see what it has done to God, to His Christ, and to man and God's creation, it is a **solemn thing**. It has shut us out from God; it has opened the gates of hell, and necessitated the death of the God of glory for any one to be saved and to come into the presence of a holy God. It is **solemn** because it has cost man the most precious possession he has ever had, and that is his never-dying soul. Fools may make a mock of sin, but to every awakened soul under the hearing of this message, sin is a **solemn** thing. It separates his soul from God and damns him to hell.

Again, the doctrine of sin as revealed in God's Word is a very **humbling** one. It does not present man as merely being ignorant and requiring instruction, nor that he is run down and needs a tonic; but rather that you and I have become undone, lost, spiritually dead, void of any righteousness that will ever commend us to God. The Word of God pictures us without strength, thoroughly incapable of bettering ourselves, exposed to the wrath of God, and unable to perform a single work which can find acceptance with a Holy God, according to Rom. 3:10-18.

The impossibility of any man's gaining the approval of God by works of his own appears plainly in the case of the rich young ruler who came to Christ, as recorded in Matt. 19. If we were to judge this young man by human standards, he was a model of virtue and religious attainments. Yet, like all others who trust in self-efforts, he was ignorant of the spirituality and strictness of God's Law, for when Christ put him to the test and showed him the covetousness of his heart, he went away sorrowful for he had great riches. It was **humbling** to this young man to find out that his best duties in religion were nothing but stinking rags in the nostrils of God. And my friend, it is **humbling** to you and I to find out that God requires truth in the inward parts and that we cannot shut off sin in our hearts, in our affections, in our desires and in our mind; for we are sinners by nature as well as by practice. Try to get rid of it and we find we cannot; it is there, in our nature. We cannot get rid of it by resolution, command, sacrifice or by shutting ourselves out from the

world; because we are by nature sinners. Jer. 13:23 reads: “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” No, we cannot change ourselves; only the powerful operation of God the Holy Spirit upon the soul can change any man.

This fact of being a sinner by nature was *humbling* to the Apostle Paul as he tells us in Rom. 7. There he tells us that he was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came that he should not covet, then all hell was turned loose in his soul as he saw that he was helpless against sin; for he was carnal, sold under sin. It was humbling to him to find out that what he wanted to do—he could not do, and that which he did not want to do—sin against a holy and righteous God—he found himself doing. It was humbling to him to find out that he had a will to do good, but no power to perform that will because his will was depraved and held captive by his sinful nature. It was humbling to him to find a law in him that he could not control—the law of sin—fight it, resolve against it, denounce it, do everything against it he would; still he could not get rid of it. It was humbling to find that sin ruled him, governed him and had damned him to hell and he could do nothing about it. No wonder he cried: “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24). Yes, when we see that awful power of sin in our lives, in our natures, it is humbling to find out we can do nothing about it.

The Apostle Paul found out what every soul finds out whom God saves: that only in the Lord Jesus Christ by the power of God the Holy Spirit can any soul be saved and the power of sin broken! My friend, have you ever found it out? I have, by the grace of God: that’s the reason I praise Him, for by His blood and by His power He saved me.

Again, the doctrine of sin as revealed in God’s Word and its effect upon you and I and all of mankind is a doctrine that is very *unpalatable*. For you and I to be told of our greatness, our dignity, our nobility as men is something we really love, we like to hear this. To hear of our educational advances, our advances in space, our scientific advances, our advances in art and literature, our advances in travel and in all kinds of technical knowledge is something that tickles the ears of pride and warms the heart; but to hear that we are lost sinners, to hear that we are depraved sinners is very *unpalatable*; we don’t like it and we shut our ears and heart to it. But whether we think it palatable or not, God’s Word does not paint a pretty picture of the awfulness of sin and its effect upon all that we are.

The word “palatable” means pleasing to the mind, agreeable; but the knowledge of what we are by nature in the sight of God is very unpalatable; we do not agree with God’s Word on this. It is not pleasing to our minds, therefore we will not by nature face the awful ruined condition that sin has brought us into, apart from the powerful working of God’s Spirit in us. Only as the light of God’s grace shines into our hearts are we made to admit that we are in God’s sight what His Word says we are—utterly ruined sinners.

That is why God *must* give us a *new heart* if ever we are saved. He tells us in Ezek. 36:26 “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.”

I hear someone asking the question: “Pastor, why must God give man a new heart?” I will answer you with a question: “Have you ever taken your Bible and with a Concordance traced out that to which the Bible compares the heart of man? Did you know that the Bible declares that the effect of sin upon man is such that our hearts, and what proceeds from our hearts, are compared to some of the most revolting things we can think of?”

Did you know that God’s Word calls us by nature a *wiggling maggot*, wallowing in the filth of the world? Well it does in Isa. 41:14 in this descriptive word: “Fear not, thou *worm* Jacob”—and the root meaning of the Hebrew word *worm* is a maggot in the cesspool; this is the way God looks upon us in the cesspool of sin outside of Christ. No wonder we need a new heart!

Did you know that God’s Word calls us a *putrefying sore* in our depraved nature? Well He does in Isa. 1:4-6: “Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint, from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it? but wounds, and bruises, and *putrefying sores*: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.” This being so, and it is, no wonder we need a new heart given to us by God!

Did you know that God’s Word declares that man in his natural state is as *menstruous rags* cast away by an unclean woman? Well it does in Isa. 64:6 where we read: “We are all as an unclean thing and all our righteousnesses are as FILTHY [the Hebrew says: *menstruous*] rags. And we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind have taken us away.” No wonder we need a new heart when God looks upon us as having such a filthy heart!

I hear someone saying, “Pastor, that’s not very palatable; it is not pleasing to hear such language!” I know it, but this is God’s Word, and I must bring it to our hearts so that we may be stripped of all our pride, all our self-righteousness and forever despair of finding anything good in us to commend us to God. We have nothing but sin to bring to Him; but praise His Holy Name He has a new heart to give us when we come to Him, because of the work of the Lord Jesus in shedding His precious blood for the remission of our sins. Yes, when we come to Christ empty-handed, knowing that our heart is filthy before God, that He cannot do anything with the old heart, but is willing to give us a new heart, then saving faith is given to lay hold of Christ and his salvation.

Again, did you know that God’s Word likens us to *hogs* and *dogs* when we return to sin? This is humbling, but it is God’s Word. Listen to II Pet. 2:20-22! “For if after they have escaped the pollution of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The *dog* is turned to his own vomit again; and the *sow* that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.” No wonder God has to give us a new heart by His Holy Spirit through grace, for the sinful heart we have is ruined beyond repair.

The Scriptures also show that sin has made man *like the beasts in ignorance and stupidity*. We read in Psa. 73:22: “So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee.” Psa. 49:20 reads: “Man that is in honour, and understandeth not [spiritually] is like the beasts that perish.” My friend, if you have not laid down the arms of your rebellion against God, if you have not confessed your sins before Him, if you have not forsaken sin and fled to Christ for refuge, if you are still playing with sin that will soon damn your never-dying soul in hell, then you are like the beasts that perish, for you are void of understanding.

Hear me again! If you make no provision for eternity and have no mind for the world to come, which is the world of eternal good or evil, then surely God’s Word pictures you accurately: you are *like a beast* that perishes. Oh that you knew your latter end and would flee to Christ for salvation! Oh let me plead with you to cry after God for mercy! God is calling you by this message today; God is speaking to your heart by His Spirit. He is showing you that all you have is a thin veneer of profession, a thin veneer of church going, a thin veneer of saying your prayers and counting your beads and doing your penance; and your heart is far from God. He is showing you that you have no covering for your never-dying soul and soon you shall stand before God like Adam, naked—naked before the eye of God—then where will you hide?

Oh that you would stand before the Holy God today! tell him you are guilty, having broken His Holy Law; tell Him you are a naked soul and have not the covering that He has provided in the Righteousness of Christ; tell Him that you are a sinner lost, a sinner damned apart from His Divine mercy; tell Him you are willing to forsake sin and follow Christ; tell Him you are willing to leave the world with all its pleasures and follow Christ; tell Him how you have sinned against Him, hated Him, lied to Him, cursed Him, broken His Holy Law; tell Him that you are the chief of sinners and that you are ready to come clean with Him, confessing all and hiding nothing; tell Him that you deserve hell, but oh as you confess, look to him by faith to have mercy upon you in Christ; for the Lord Jesus Christ Himself came to seek and to save just the type of sinner you have confessed to be.

My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will so work in your heart that you will not be able to rest until you rest in Christ.

I ask this question in closing: “Do *we give ourselves* a new heart and nature?” Oh no, it is wholly and completely of SOVEREIGN GRACE, given to us out of FREE MERCY by the very One Whom we have sinned against. God Himself is the Giver of new hearts for Christ’s sake. He gives new hearts because of His love for poor sinners. He gives new hearts because Christ, by His obedience unto death, paid—by the shedding of His precious blood—the sin- debt owed to God’s Law and justice by His sinful people. He justifies poor sinners because Christ has triumphed over death, hell and the grave and becomes the righteousness of poor sinners. Out of free mercy and grace the Holy and Just God receives everyone who comes unto Him by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

