

Taking Sin Seriously

# Sin

- Many opinions and misconceptions about sin
  - Archaic laws from an ancient civilization
  - A set of rules to manipulate people
  - How religions sell their doctrine
  - Anything (a specific religious leader) says is bad
  - Whatever a group of people decide is wrong
  - Whatever an individual believes is objectionable
  - A fiction designed for religions to control their followers
  - Just your imagination
- Common theme: attempting to make sin irrelevant
  - “I don’t want to think of myself as a *sinner*.”
  - “If sin isn’t real, then I can do what I want.”

# Sin

- Easy to downplay sin
  - “Greater/lesser sins”
  - “White lies”
  - “Lesser of two evils”
  - “Just a little mistake”
  - “It didn’t hurt anyone”
  - “Shouldn’t make a big deal out of it”
  - “It’s not like I *killed* someone”
  - “At least I’m not as bad as...”
- World’s discomfort with sin can rub off on us
  - “It just feels wrong to me”
  - “It’s not something I personally do”

# Taking Sin Seriously

## I. The Definition of Sin

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- OT: “miss (a goal or way), go wrong, sin” – 595 times
- NT: “to miss the mark; to err, be mistaken; to do or go wrong” – 267 times
  - Judges 20:16
    - Among all this people were seven hundred select men who were left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair’s breadth and not miss.
    - Ability to hit the target – to *not* ‘sin’

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  - Judges 20:16
  - Acts 25:7-8
    - <sup>7</sup> When he had come, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood about and laid many serious complaints against Paul, which they could not prove, <sup>8</sup> while he answered for himself, “Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar have I offended in anything at all.”
    - Paul had broken no laws—either Jewish or Roman

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- NT: “to miss the mark; to err, be mistaken; to do or go wrong” – 267 times
  - Judges 20:16
  - Acts 25:7-8
  - Proverbs 19:2
    - Also it is not good for a soul to be without knowledge,  
And he sins who hastens with his feet.
    - Without wisdom, likely to go the wrong way

# I. The Definition of Sin

- Israel's golden calf
  - In Exodus 24, God calls Moses up on Mount Sinai for 40 days and nights
  - Exodus 32:1
    - Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."
- Israel's response: a carved image
  - Exodus 20:4-5
    - <sup>4</sup> "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;  
<sup>5</sup> you shall not bow down to them nor serve them."



# I. The Definition of Sin

- Israel's golden calf
  - Exodus 32:7-8; 30
    - <sup>7</sup> And the Lord said to Moses, "Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. <sup>8</sup> They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!' "
    - <sup>30</sup> Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."
  - God gave a command, Israel 'turned aside'

# I. The Definition of Sin

- God's definition of sin

- 1 John 3:4

- Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.
    - Sin is acting 'without law' – as if the law doesn't exist

- Psalm 119:101-104

- <sup>101</sup> I have restrained my feet from every evil way,  
That I may keep Your word.
    - <sup>102</sup> I have not departed from Your judgments,  
For You Yourself have taught me.
    - <sup>103</sup> How sweet are Your words to my taste,  
Sweeter than honey to my mouth!
    - <sup>104</sup> Through Your precepts I get understanding;  
Therefore I hate every false way.

# Taking Sin Seriously

I. The Definition of Sin

**II. The Consequences of Sin**

## II. The Consequences of Sin

- The problem with sin
  - Sin is against God's very nature
    - 1 John 1:5-6
      - <sup>5</sup> This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. <sup>6</sup> If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.
  - God *cannot* abide sin

## II. The Consequences of Sin

- The problem with sin
  - Sin is against God's very nature
  - Sin separates us from God
    - Isaiah 59:1-3
      - <sup>1</sup> Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened,  
That it cannot save;  
Nor His ear heavy,  
That it cannot hear.
      - <sup>2</sup> But your iniquities have separated you from your God;  
And your sins have hidden His face from you,  
So that He will not hear.
      - <sup>3</sup> For your hands are defiled with blood,  
And your fingers with iniquity;  
Your lips have spoken lies,  
Your tongue has muttered perversity.
  - *Our* actions distance us from God

## II. The Consequences of Sin

- The problem with sin
  - Sin is against God's very nature
  - Sin separates us from God
  - Sin disinherits us
    - 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
      - <sup>9</sup> Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, <sup>10</sup> nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.
  - We turn our backs on God, His family, and His kingdom

## II. The Consequences of Sin

- The problem with sin
  - Sin is against God's very nature
  - Sin separates us from God
  - Sin disinherits us
  - Sin is spiritually fatal
    - James 1:13-15
      - <sup>13</sup> Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. <sup>14</sup> But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. <sup>15</sup> Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.
    - Our desires lead us down a different path – death!

## II. The Consequences of Sin

- *Any* sin is sin!
  - James 2:10-11
    - <sup>10</sup> For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. <sup>11</sup> For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.
  - No “white lies”, no “little sins”
  - Two paths: *God’s way* and *our way*
    - Jeremiah 29:11
      - For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.



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  - No “white lies”, no “little sins”
  - Two paths: *God’s way* and *our way*
    - Jeremiah 29:11
    - Isaiah 55:8-9
      - <sup>8</sup> “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord.
      - <sup>9</sup> “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

# Taking Sin Seriously

- I. The Definition of Sin
- II. The Consequences of Sin
- III. The Price of Sin**

### III. The Price of Sin

- Everything comes with a price
  - Romans 6:20-21, 23
    - <sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. <sup>21</sup> What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.
    - <sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death . . .
  - Our actions earn ‘wages’ – separation from God
    - Matthew 25:41-43
      - <sup>41</sup> “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: <sup>42</sup> for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; <sup>43</sup> I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ ”

### III. The Price of Sin

- God has offered an alternative
  - Leviticus 17:11
    - “For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.”

### III. The Price of Sin

- God has offered an alternative
  - Leviticus 17:11
  - Isaiah 53:5-6
    - <sup>5</sup> But He was wounded for our transgressions,  
He was bruised for our iniquities;  
The chastisement for our peace was upon Him,  
And by His stripes we are healed.
    - <sup>6</sup> All we like sheep have gone astray;  
We have turned, every one, to his own way;  
And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

### III. The Price of Sin

- God has offered an alternative
  - Leviticus 17:11
  - Isaiah 53:5-6
  - Hebrews 9:26-28
    - <sup>26</sup> . . . but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.
    - <sup>27</sup> And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, <sup>28</sup> so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

### III. The Price of Sin

- Christ suffered and died to pay for our sins
  - To make light of sin is to make light of His suffering
    - Hebrews 10:26-29
      - <sup>26</sup> For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup> but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. <sup>28</sup> Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup> Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?
- Do we view even 'small' sins as "trampling the Son of God underfoot?"

# The Seriousness of Sin

- What sin is *not*:
  - A list of old and irrelevant rules
  - A religious fiction to control followers
  - A set of arbitrary laws from a vindictive god
- What sin *is*:
  - Our free will decision to depart from God's good way
  - Our choice to separate ourselves from our Father
  - Covered by Christ's sacrifice



# The Seriousness of Sin

- Hebrews 12:1-2
  - <sup>1</sup> Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.