



The Good News

March 3rd, 2019

Volume 19, Issue 9

Considering the Seriousness of Sin

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Whether we are relatively young Christians or older Christians, we are always faced with temptations that can lead to sin. We sometimes become entrenched in sinful habits that we have trouble breaking. One of the ways to help us think through temptations is to understand what sin does to us, thereby understanding why it is such a serious concept with God.

We learn that in that Garden of Eden, sin entered the world and thereby ended the communion that God had with His creation. (**Gen. 2ff**) From that moment, the plan of salvation was set in motion (having been planned from creation, Eph. 1) to the end that God could once again commune with His creation. We learn in **Rom. 5:12-17** that by Adam's sin, separation occurred between man and God. This separation continued through the years, as evidenced by the Old Law, which required the High Priest to undergo a special purification process in order to offer sacrifices for the people. The Hebrew writer says that the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin, and so a more perfect sacrifice was necessary – Jesus Christ (**Heb. 10:4**). It is this sacrifice that enables us to commune with God, having boldness to enter the Most Holy (**Heb. 10:19**). So what happens when I sin? **Heb. 10:26** tells us that if we sin after we have learned what is right and wrong, there is no more hope of sacrifice...just condemnation. This means that if I become a Christian and then decide to give myself to sin and never repent of those sins I will be condemned, thus showing that sin continues to separate me from my God if I commit it. In **II Pet. 2:4, 18ff** we learn that if I escape the sin of the world and then become again entangled in it, it will be worse for me in the end, because I knew the truth and decided to turn away from it.

What is sin? John tells us in **I John 5:17** that all unrighteousness is sin. As we examine the Scriptures, God tells us what all falls into this category. Passages like **Gal. 5:19-21** and **I Cor. 6:10-11** give us lists of sins that people commit that will condemn them in the day of judgment. Included in the lists are liars, sexually im-

moral, drunkards, homosexuals...these will not inherit the kingdom of God. Suppose then that I am a Christian, but I commit one of these sins and then I die without repenting...will I be condemned? Hear what God says in **Ezekiel 33:12-13**, "*Therefore you, O son of man, say to the children of your people: 'The righteousness of the righteous man will not save him in the day that he sins...nor shall the righteous be able to live because of his righteousness in the day that he sins...but because of the sin that he has committed, he shall die.'*" This may not be fair in our eyes, but God has spoken it, and it shall be because God cannot lie (**Heb. 6:18**).

How do we know that those who do not live properly (Christians and non-Christians alike) will be condemned? In **Rom. 2:8**, we learn that those who do not obey the truth will receive indignation and wrath. This tells us that there is a standard of truth...only ONE way to worship God and only ONE way to serve Him, despite the 3,000+ different ways that man has devised. Paul says in **Eph. 4:1-7** that there is ONE faith, ONE baptism, etc. In **I Cor. 6:9**, Paul says that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God.

What is to be done? **Rom. 6:1-13** tells us that we should die to sin and give ourselves to righteousness. **Acts 2:38**, Peter told the Jews to repent and be baptized. **John 3:5**, Jesus says that unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. In **I John 1:9**, Christians have the avenue of asking forgiveness for sins via prayer. Considering the seriousness of sin and what it does to our relationship with God, we should always seek to practice righteousness, avoiding sin at all costs. But now, given what you have learned of sin, do you feel as though you are too lost to be saved? That God can't possibly allow you into Heaven because of the mistakes in your past? Listen to the sermon this morning as we consider the Parable of the Prodigal Son.