

THE FALL OF MAN: SIN AND ITS PUNISHMENT

I believe it is safe to say that the subject of sin is the most unpopular subject known to man. It is an offence to our innate sense of personal achievement. We don't like to hear its mention ... sometimes not even Christians want to hear it spoken about! It shows up our shortcomings; it shows up our failings; and it shows us up for what we really are!

The *Shorter Catechism* describes it, "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God".

I worked with men and women, - many of whom denied they had a problem. Many of them had lost loving families, good jobs, money in the bank and a comfortable lifestyle. They exchanged it all for the booze that was accompanied with a life that left them living in vagrancy on the streets of London. It was sin that drew them further into its clutches than they had ever meant to go ... but yet, they would have no thought of Christ.

We live in a world that seems to go from one major catastrophe to another. How *do* we deal with the alcoholic? I know of alcoholic refuges where alcohol is given to the alcoholics so they don't fall into crime or go wanting. Similarly, drug addicts are taken into pharmacies and given a heroin substitute ... and the 'birds in the trees' know these addicts are still being supplied the heroin from their dealers as well! They laugh at you when you mention Christ.

The official figure for those who died of AIDS in 2004 is 3.1 million ... while a further 39.4 million are living today with HIV/AIDS. The remedy? ... safer sex, and teach the children more about it from the age of five years old!

In a part of the United Kingdom, how do you deal with murderers who kill men, women and children? ... Answer ... you give them jobs in government, with respect and hundreds of thousands of pounds to keep them there.

How do you deal with young people who already are prolific criminals? Answer ... You seek to appeal to their 'better' nature and give them privileges they never would have had if the State had not granted them.

Someone driving home from a party under the influence of alcohol; they knock an innocent person down and kill him as he walked along the footpath ... what does the driver get for it? ... He gets banned for five years and fined £500.

And yet, mention the subject of sin and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ to defeat sin and you are lambasted as being a fundamentalist ... no better than the Middle Eastern terrorists (or insurgents, as they are called nowadays).

You can easily understand how Habakkuk felt, [1:3 Why dost thou show me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention. 4 Therefore the law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.](#)

HOW FAR HAS HUMANITY FALLEN IN HIS SIN?

- * We have covered this before so often ... and yet we need to have it always before us.
- * It's not a matter, - as some of the liberals would tell you - of those Bible-believing traditionalists wanting to keep you in the Dark Ages by scaring you into submission.
- * Instead, it is a matter of simple Biblical fact. *The Bible says it!*
- * Consider the tremendous spiritual height from which humanity has fallen.
 - * Man was made in the image of God ... but yet he consciously and deliberately and selfishly exchanged that privilege in order to follow his own desires.
 - * Man had a perfect relationship with God. He had the kind of relationship with God that will be renewed in Glory. Man

dismissed this privilege as he sought his own pleasure and promotion.

- * Man had a perfect relationship with his wife ... a relationship that would have been mirrored in their children, had the parents not sinned.
- * Man had a perfect relationship with the whole of creation. He could stroke a lion and it wouldn't bite. He could hold a cobra and it wouldn't strike. He lived in perfect harmony with all that God created.
- * And then one day, along came a serpent and spoke with the woman, - ... if the Bible says that's what happened, then that's what happened!
- * He came up to her and she ought to have known something was not just right; when he said, **3:1 Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? ... she lingered.**
- * When he was subtly and gradually introducing doubt on God's Word ... **she listened.**
- * When the serpent spoke about the tree in the midst of the garden ... **she looked.**
- * And the more he spoke about it and the more **she looked ... she longed.**
- * And because **she lingered, she listened, she looked, she longed** ... it was only a matter of time before **she lunged!**
- * He spun his yarn and she was wrapped up in it! And there at that moment sin entered into this world ... and it has never left it since! "Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God."
- * How far has sin pulled us down? Sin has pulled us so far down that it is impossible for humanity, - in our own strength or desire, - to ever pull ourselves out of it.
- * The Bible says we are spiritually blind, - how can a blind man know where he's going! He doesn't have an aid. If he turns one direction it is darkness ... another direction, it is darkness. The Bible says we are spiritually blind.
- * It also says we are spiritually deaf. We can't hear a thing spiritually, - that's why when you bring a loved one or a friend to hear the preaching of the Gospel you can hear it so plainly *but*

they can't! It's because of this spiritual deafness and spiritual blindness.

- * But the Bible says it's a worse situation than only being spiritually blind or deaf or losing any of our other faculties ... the Bible says the sinner is spiritually *dead!* That is the effect of sin!
- * It is not because of the age of a person, or the mental ability, or anything else. It is because every person that has ever been born, - with only one exception! – has been born [dead in trespasses and in sin](#). That's the truth, that's what the Bible says.
- * Jesus said, [Mt. 7:18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.](#)
- * It is a spiritual impossibility for a spiritually blind, a spiritually deaf, spiritually dead person to call out for spiritual life. *It is a spiritual impossibility!* If it were even remotely possible you would find about every grave in the graveyard empty!
- * In the Garden of Eden humanity has spiritually fallen to deathly proportions!
- * “How does all this effect me? I wasn't there. I didn't disobey.” ... Go to [Gen. 5:3 And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image.](#) What does that mean? ... Look at [Rom. 5:12 as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: ... 14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.](#) That's how serious it is! That is the legacy of Adam's image.
- * Can you make yourself 'undead'? Of course, you can't! This is how serious this 'spiritual death' actually is!
- * You and I have no more power to save someone and to raise them from spiritual death and sin as we have to raise anyone from physical death!
- * [Rom. 5:12 as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ...](#) That is how deadly sin is!

IN HIS SIN, HOW CAPABLE IS MAN OF RISING OUT OF HIS FALLEN STATE?

- * The answer is simple. Man is totally and absolutely and completely incapable and unable to rectify himself. It is a hopeless situation! There is *nothing* he can do ... for he is spiritually dead!
- * In this state of spiritual death humanity is under God's wrath. ... "Now, hold on a minute ... if he is spiritually dead how can he be under God's wrath; how would he then be able to *feel* God's punishment?"
- * Yes, he is spiritually dead ... and this is evidenced by the fact that he sins. Despite the goodness of the grace of God being all around him his sin is the blockage to him regarding God as God.
- * Read through Revelation 16 and you'll find a world whose nature is totally at war with God.
- * They are without excuse ... and the Bible says that at the coming of Christ the Gospel will have been preached and heard by all nations. The world counts its wages in terms of money, riches, and popularity ... but the Bible says [the wages of sin is death](#).
- * How can he then *feel* God's punishment? Rev. 20 begins with the devil being thrown into the bottomless pit ... then he's loosed; in v.10 you see him being cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, along with the beast and the false prophet. ...
- * Next comes the most frightening part. It's the judgement of God upon all mankind. The Bible says, [v. 11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; 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. 13 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 ... 15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.](#)
- * Every man, woman, boy and girl will be held accountable for their sinful nature and their practices because of their "transgression against the law of God".

- * Sin is an awful subject. Even before you start talking about hell ... sin is an awful subject.
- * It is terrifying, frightening. “Stop talking about it! We don’t want to hear!”
- * The *Confession of Faith* says, “Conceived in sin and by nature children subject to God’s anger, the servants of sin and the subjects of death, all men are now given up to unspeakable miseries, spiritual, temporal and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus Christ sets them free.” ... That last bit ... *beautiful*, absolutely beautiful.
- * And not only beautiful, but *marvellous* that the Son of God should step into the place of punishment for the Redeemed.

MAN’S ONLY HOPE

- * Jesus Christ and Him alone, - there is no other Saviour, or saving religion or philosophy, - Jesus Christ is the only Saviour that God, - the Creator of this world, - provided. [Acts 4:12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.](#)
- * How privileged we are that along the road of life God directed us to the Gospel and to the Saviour.
- * He stopped us where we were and how we were and He breathed into us that Holy Spirit breath of spiritual life. As new creatures alive in Him we began to see, - we were no longer spiritually blind, - we began to hear and to feel His promptings.
- * And the all-powerful God *drew* us graciously unto Himself. ... Do you see anything of man in his salvation ... anything he can boast about? No, there’s nothing he can boast about, [salvation is of the Lord. Jer. 1:5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee.](#)
- * Sin binds ... but Christ sets free! Sin puts to death ... Christ brings to life! Jesus Christ is man’s only hope ... and as long as man is alive there is hope for his eternal welfare, but only in Christ.

Conclusion

- * Just a couple of miles from where Pearl and I come from a young ten-year-old boy was in the car with his older sister. Another car collided with them and the young boy was killed. Just the previous evening he came in from a children's meeting, all excited, "Mum, I've something to tell you, I've got saved!" Just a few hours later he left the arms of his mother and was lifted into the arms of his Saviour.
- * Sin is the darkest of subjects. It affects us all, - it even affected Christ as He hung on the cross ... such was its power.
- * You still have loved ones who are bound and shackled in sin, - yes, it's a terrible knowledge to have that if they died this very moment they would be swallowed into the torment of hell forever.
- * But there's an even greater knowledge to have ... and that is *Jesus Christ saves!* He can save them. No matter what they have done, what they are doing, what they are planning to do. God in His all-sovereign mercy can interrupt them where they are and irresistibly draw them with those cords of lovingkindness.
- * The same God that sent Jesus to save you can bring your loved ones to the same saving faith. It was God that saved you, it is God that can save them. Pray for them. Believe God can do it. Pray for them some more ... and keep on trusting in God to save them.
- * It's an awful subject to speak to anyone about, but why speak about sin to believers? To remind you of its terrible power and its consequences, but also to remind you that we have a Saviour to whom there are no obstacles to *anyone's* salvation.