

Sin?

We have completed our study on the identity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and will now be studying what the Bible says about various important topics, such as sin, the problem of evil, heaven and hell, manhood and womanhood, work, school, and other pertinent topics. It is crucial that we understand the basic truths of the Bible and that we understand what God says about the basic elements of our lives.

When Anna Grace and I were looking for a house to purchase last year, we found a few properties that we thought had good potential to be our future home. There were two houses in particular that we were really interested in, but we wanted someone with critical expertise to look over the houses before we made an offer, so we asked my grandfather to evaluate the houses with us since he has been an excellent carpenter in his life. After Pappaw was done looking through these houses that we thought were good options, we decided we needed to look elsewhere after he had pointed out problematic leaks, poor roofing, rotting foundations, and even roaches. Thankfully, by God's providence, we were led to our pleasant home now on George Street, which was fully approved by Pappaw.

When we were looking at those houses, we thought they were basically good homes that we could buy and live in—and we could have lived in them—but our view of them shifted dramatically when we were shown their subtle dilapidation that we were not wise enough to see. A similar thing happens to us when the wise prophets and apostles of the Bible tell us about our sin. We think that our life is going well enough and that we are basically good people, until God points out our flaws and corruption, and we realize that we are rotten and unsound like an old abandoned house.

What is sin? The word is so commonly used in the church—in our songs, prayers, Bible readings, sermons, lessons, and conversations—so obviously quite important. Sin is disobeying God. Sin is an offense against God, a crime before God, an evil act in his sight. Sins are not merely mistakes or imperfections to which we can just say, “Whoops” after we realize what we have done. Sin is an act of treachery against our Creator.

Read Genesis 3:1-7. In this passage, we find the origins of sin and the resulting death that permeates our world in the fall of Adam and Eve. When God at first made man, he told him that he may surely eat of any tree in the lovely garden of Eden, except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He must not eat of that tree, for in the day that he ate of it, he would surely die.

As Moses tells us, the cunning serpent came and sought to subvert God's order and tempted Eve to disobey God's simple command. Being deceived by the serpent's lies, she took the fruit and ate it and gave some to Adam, who was silently standing beside her.

The account of the first sin of humanity shows us many things that are generally true about our own sins. First, we see that sin comes by temptation. Being tempted to sin is not a sin itself. However, when we are aware of the temptation, we are often already sinning by desiring disobedience in our hearts. Second, we see that sin disregards God. The devil asks Eve to disregard what God had said by asking, "Did God actually say..." and "You will not surely die..." The diabolical snake was telling Eve that God did not tell them the truth or what was really good for them. The serpent said that God was not true or good, but he was withholding something delightful from them because he was nervous that they would become like him, or even greater than him. Third, in disregarding God, we see that the root of sin is unbelief and pride. God had already told Adam and Eve what was good and what was evil. They were to look to him for the knowledge of what was good and what was evil. When they ate the forbidden fruit, they had decided that they wanted to decide what was right and wrong apart from God. They wanted to take God's place, and exalt themselves to a higher status than what God had given them. They did not believe what God had said about the consequence of the disobedience, and they arrogantly trusted their own minds over God's. Fourth, we see that sin can appear desirable and rational. When Eve listened to the serpent, she evaluated the fruit to see if it was worth eating. She saw that it was good for sustenance, which was something she and her husband needed. She saw that it was a beautiful fruit that God had made, which enticed her senses to taste it. And she incorrectly thought that the fruit would give her the wisdom to discern good and evil. Her decision seemed to make sense: a healthy, delicious fruit that would give her great wisdom. But, it did not give her wisdom, instead it was her demise.

Our sin is just like the Adam and Eve's in so many ways. Our sin comes by temptation, and we are tempted constantly. When we sin, we are disregarding God, thinking that our ways are better than his. God says that sex is exclusively for the husband and the wife, but sinners follow their own opinions and continue in lust and immorality. God says that love is the basic commandment to live by, but sinners esteem others to be worthy of only hate, impatience, or dismissal. God says that all should humbly give thanks to him for all things, but sinners are not convinced that God exists and think they deserve all that they are given. Even worse, sinners

convince themselves often that they are doing is actually right. They deceive themselves into thinking that the sin is truly is good, right, truthful, beautiful, and enlivening.

Who are sinners? Who sins? Psalm 14 says that when God looks down upon the earth on all the children of Adam, he finds that not a single one of us is a good person. None of us understand, none of us seek him, and none of us are righteous. Not you. Not me. We all have inherited Adam and Eve's sinful ways and show our lineage from our birth. We are foolish, hard-hearted, prideful sinners, just like the rest of mankind, just like your neighbors and classmates.

How does God react to such behavior? If you keep reading in Genesis, you will find that God justly curses the serpent, mankind, and the earth because of sin, and that Adam and Eve do physically die. Later, we see how God feels about the sinful human race before he destroys them with a flood in Genesis 6:5-6, which says, **“The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD regretted that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart.”** In this passage we learn many important things about sin as well. One thing that we are taught here is that we are sinful with our whole being. Our thoughts, feelings, and actions are stained with sin, so that we sin continually. Even when we genuinely do good things, sin is there in some manner, either in selfishness or ingratitude. Another thing we learn here is that sin grieves and angers God. Our sins are insulting acts against God. We are trying to do away with him like Adam and Eve. We are treating God with contempt, like he is of less worth than ourselves. Sin truly is terrible, not matter how disguised it may be.

Sin ruins us. We die when we sin. Contrary to what we think and feel, sin is not good, or permissible; it is poisonous. God curses us for our sin and sentences us to death.

These truths are shocking and sobering. We must not forget them. If you are apathetic towards your sin, you will never see how great a Savior Jesus is. God is most merciful to us by telling us what is terribly wrong with us. Just as it was loving for my grandfather to tell us what was wrong with the houses we were setting our hearts on, so it is also loving for God to tell us what is actually killing us. If we listen to him, then we will be on the path to life.