2016 Fall Semester

Foundations

# Fall

## Sin is important to understand because it affects what we believe about almost everything else:

### Nature of God – If God is a very high, pure, and holy being who expects all humans to be as He is (be perfect for I am perfect), then even the slightest deviation from God’s standard is serious. But if God is imperfect or is lenient in his punishment of sin, then the human condition is not all that serious.

### Doctrine of Salvation – If a human is basically good with strong intellectual and moral capabilities, then perhaps the only thing needed to improve one’s standing before God is a better education about what God expects. But if humans are corrupt and rebellious by nature, if sin affects us to the very fiber of our being, then a more radical transformation of the person is what is needed. The more sever our conception of sin, the more supernatural the salvation needed.

### Style of ministry – If people are basically good, moral people, then our message would be one of encouragement and positive affirmation, encouraging people to do their best. But on the other hand, if persons are seen as radically sinful, then they will need to be told to repent and to be born again.

## The origin of human sin: Genesis 3:1-7

## There are several ways that Scripture describes sin. All of these terms should be studied to properly understand exactly how bad sin really is.

### Ignorance – ignorance of who God is and what he requires of us. “They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.” – Ephesians 4:18

### Error – faults and incidents that simply should not have occurred. Oftentimes “errors” refer to mistakes made that go against what natural order dictates. “For this reason, God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature, and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.” – Romans 1:26-27

### Inattention – sin is described as disobedience resulting from inattention in Hebrew 2:2-3, “For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?”

### Missing the mark – this is the most common biblical use of the term sin. The most prominent and clear use of this term is in Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” All have missed the mark of God’s glory.

### Irreligion/Unrighteousness – sin is described in the New Testament as a failure to meet up to standards of righteousness. “Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God?” – 1 Corinthians 6:9

### Transgression – means literally “to cross over.” God has drawn a line in the sand and we have crossed over that line. We have transgressed the law of God. Numbers 14:41 says, “Why have you transgressed the Lord’s command?”

### Iniquity – basically refers to a lack of integrity. A failure to maintain a straight and narrow lifestyle. Deviating from the path of righteousness and justice. Leviticus 19:15 “Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.”

### Rebellion – this speaks of our seeking to usurp God from his power over us. “I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me.” – Isaiah 1:2

### Treachery – this is a breach of trust. Oftentimes used to describe a person’s unfaithfulness to their spouse. Leviticus 26:40, “But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers—their treachery against me and their hostility toward me…”

### Perversion – to bend or twist. Titus 3:10: “As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.”

### Abomination – this word is used to describe something that is particularly reprehensible to God. By definition, an abomination is something that produces revulsion in God. Such sins are those of idolatry (Deuteronomy 7:25-26), homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22; 20:13), wearing clothing of the opposite sex (Deuteronomy 22:5), sacrificing children (Deuteronomy 12:31), and witchcraft (Deuteronomy 18:9-12).

## Definition of Sin: sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature.

### The three different spheres of act, attitude, and nature can all be supported from many different passages of Scripture, but there is one discourse given by the Lord Jesus that shows all three of these aspects.

## Mark 7:14-23

### Acts of Sin

#### “evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, and wickedness.” – sins of commission

#### This is something that condemns all mankind in terms of what we do. The scriptures testify in many places of the universal sinfulness of mankind.

##### Psalm 143:2 – “No man living is righteous before You.”

##### 1 Kings 8:46 – “There is no man who does not sin.”

##### Romans 3:10 – “There is none righteous, no not one.”

#### And not only are we guilty for bad things that we do, but we are also guilty of the good things that we don’t do. – sins of omission

##### James 4:17 declares, “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and does not do it, to him it is sin.”

##### Classic example is given in the Parable of the Good Samaritan

### Attitudes of Sin

#### “deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.”

##### It’s not only the things that we do, but the attitudes that we have. Just the fact that we desire sin makes us sinners.

### Nature of Sin Within Us

#### “For within, out of the heart of man…All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

#### It is not as though some parts of us are sinful and others are good. Rather, every part of our being is affected by sin—our intellects, our emotions and desires, our hearts, our goals, our motives, and even our physical bodies.

##### Paul says in Romans 7:18, “I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh.”

##### Titus 1:15 says that “to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds and consciences are corrupted.”

##### Moreover, Jeremiah tells us that “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?” – Jeremiah 17:9

## The Results of Sin

### Chaos

#### We sin from within: “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it?” – Jeremiah 17:9. Our hearts deceive us.

#### We sin from without: “If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue, he deceives his own heart; this man’s religion is worthless.” – James 1:26

#### Romans 7:15 – “For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want (sins of omission), but I do the very thing I hate (sins of commission).” And again in verse 19, “For I do not do the good I want (sins of omission), but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing (sins of commission).”

#### Paul explains why this is in verses 21-23, “So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my body another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my body.”

#### It is utter chaos that sin causes. It is no wonder that after discussing all of this, Paul cries out “Oh wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death!?”

### We cannot do any spiritual good before God

#### Romans 8:8 – “Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

#### Hebrews 11:16 – “Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

#### Isaiah 64:6 – “all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.”

### Death

#### Spiritual Death

##### Genesis 2:17: “For when you eat of it, you shall surely die.”

##### This obviously did not mean that they would experience immediate physical death, although it did mean that their potential mortality would become actual.

##### Spiritual death is what is immediate from this; a separation from God. This separation is first seen when Adam and Eve try to hide themselves from God.

##### Isaiah 59:2 – “but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.”

##### Ephesians 2:1-2 – “You were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked.”

##### Romans 8:6-7 – “For to set the mind on the flesh is death…For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God’s law; indeed, it cannot.”

#### Physical death

##### The mortality of all humans is an obvious fact and a truth taught to us by scripture. Hebrews 9:27 says, “People are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”

##### Paul in Romans 5:12 attributes death to sin, particularly the original sin of Adam in which all of humanity was subsequently infected with. “Yet while death entered the world through one man, it spread to all men because all sinned.”

##### It seems that death was pronounced as a judgment upon man by God when he cursed man in Genesis 3:19 – “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

##### Romans 6:23 is the most often cited verse: “For the wages of sin is death…”

### Suffering

#### Originally pronounced as a result of the fall by God:

##### Genesis 3:16 – “To the woman he said, ‘I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

##### Genesis 3:17 – “And to Adam he said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, “You shall not eat of it,” cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground.”

###### God cursed the ground that man was taken from causing a disruption in the harmonious relationship that originally existed between humans and nature. There was an abundance in the garden, but now that abundance is taken away, and man’s attempts to cultivate the earth will be foiled by the “thorns and thistles” that the earth now produces. Man is subject to toil all of his life.

#### Some of it is deserved and some undeserved

##### 1 Peter 2:19-20 – “For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.”

###### In both cases, the suffering is the result of sin, either your own, or someone else’s.

###### There is suffering that we experience because of our own sin: addiction, family and marital strife, poverty due to financial irresponsibility, etc.

###### There is suffering that we experience because of other’s sin: co-dependency, abuse, etc.

###### There is suffering that comes from just living in a fallen world: infertility, physical and mental disabilities.

#### Sin causes all societal problems.

##### James 4:1-2 – “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire and do not have, so you kill. You covet, but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight.”

#### Even creation is subject to sin

##### Romans 8:20a – “For the creation was subjected to futility…”

###### Earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, tornados; none of these damaging things were supposed to happen, or at least if they were they weren’t supposed to bring destruction and pain.

## God is sovereign over sin

### Sovereignty - God has absolute rule over creation as King and total control over all that happens.

### Romans 8:20b – “…not willingly, but by him who subjected it.”

### This is seen in God’s interactions with Pharaoh in Exodus 7:1-5: “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, Pharaoh will not listen to you.”

### The words that we use when we describe God’s interaction and sovereignty over sin matter a lot and we should be very careful about exactly what we say.

### For example, we cannot say…

#### “God created sin.” This flies in direct opposition to His holiness.

#### “God tempts me to sin.” James rebukes this idea in chapter 1:13 when he says, “Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.”

### We could say something like…

#### “God governs all things in this world and even sin is not outside his control.”

#### “God rules the world and everything that happens in it.”

#### “God foresees all that will come and he can stop anything he pleases from happening, or he can permit it to happen. And if he stops it or permits it, he thus controls whether it happens.”

### This is based on several scriptures. There are TONS of scriptures that speak of God’s sovereignty over sin, but here are a few pertinent ones:

#### Ephesians 1:11, “In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according the counsel of his will.” So God works all things according to the counsel of his will.

#### When Joseph’s brothers in the Old Testament sold him into slavery, they sinned. Both Genesis and Psalms teach that this was planned and ordained and brought about by God. It says in Psalm 105:17, “[God] had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave.” God sent him. That was what happened when he was sold as a slave. And Joseph himself describes the event in Genesis 50:20 when he says, “As for you [you brothers], you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good.” He doesn’t say, “God used it for good.” They had a meaning. It was an evil meaning. God had a meaning. It was a good meaning. And he brought about salvation for the people of God and the redemption that would one day come through Jesus. So, yes, God was in, on, controlling, governing, bringing about what happened there.

#### God’s restraining of sin in Romans 1 and His giving them over to sin.

#### David’s sinful census

##### 2 Samuel 24:1 – “Again, the anger of the LORD was kindled against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, “Go, number Israel and Judah.”

##### 2 Samuel 24:10 – “But David’s heart struck him after he had numbered the people. And David said to the LORD, ‘I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have done very foolishly.’”

##### 1 Chronicles 21:1 – “Then Satan stood against Israel and incited David to number Israel.”

##### 1 Chronicles 21:7-8 – “But God was displeased with this thing and he struck Israel. And David said to God, “I have sinned greatly in that I have done this thing. But now, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly.”

##### 2 Samuel informs us that God incited David to take the census. 1 Chronicles tells us that Satan incited David. And, in both accounts, David takes full responsibility for his folly.

#### Acts 4:27-28 – “Truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place.”

### J.I. Packer, in Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God, said

#### “An antinomy exists when a pair of principles stand side by side, seemingly irreconcilable, yet both undeniable. There are cogent reasons for believing each of them; each rests on clear and solid evidence, but it is a mystery to know how they can be squared with each other. You see that each must be true on its own, but you do not see how they can both be true together . . . two seemingly incompatible positions must be held together, and both must be treated as true. Such a necessity scandalizes our tidy minds, no doubt, but there is no help for it if we are to be loyal to the facts. What the Bible does is to assert both truths side by side in the strongest and most unambiguous terms as two ultimate facts; this, therefore is the position we must take in our own thinking.

### C. H. Spurgeon was once asked if he could reconcile these two truths to each other. “I wouldn’t try,” he replied; “I never reconcile friends.”

## When wondering why God would allow sin to come about, we see how there are many attributes of God that we would not know otherwise had there not been sin.

### Wrath

### Holiness

### Goodness

### Patience and Longsuffering

### Grace

### Sovereignty

## Mysterious? Yes. Incomprehensible? Of course. Wonderful? In every way.