

# What Is Sin?

RADIO MESSAGE BY DWIGHT PORTER, D.D.

**T**HIS is one of the oldest subjects to be discussed. It originated in the mind of Satan before the creation of man. Are you aware that Satan was the first sinner? Basically, sin is the big "I" in SIN. It is nothing more or less than self-consciousness. This was Satan's downfall from the lofty heights of heaven.

Listen to his self-consciousness recorded in Isaiah 14:12-14: "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." Notice that five times he stated, "I will." This was his approach to Eve in the Garden of Eden. To accomplish his scheme, he had to make poor Eve feel sorry for herself. Her self-consciousness led to the conclusion that God was asking too much and depriving her of that which was rightfully hers.

Is it necessary to remind you of the little preaching against sin in our day? Few radio and television preachers and pastors expose sin and declare its certain consequence of judgment. The pressure is on in evangelical circles to change our phraseology. We are being told that the old Bible terms are out of date and antiquated. Terms like "SIN," "hell-bound," and "damnation" are no longer intelligible to modern, cultured minds. They declare that old truths should be given a modern dress. The choice of the words used in the Bible originated with God. I still believe in the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. Instead of deciding what is sin based upon the moral standards of modern society, we had better recognize sin from God's declared standpoint. It is clearly outlined in His Word. If the ultimate end of sinners is hell, it is time for us to understand what sin is and why there is pronounced such horrible judgment upon it by a holy God.

## **Nature of Sin**

Satan entered into the human race through Adam and Eve; sin became universal. This we read in Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, 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." The consequence of this sin is physical and spiritual death.

"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17). "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Man is born to sin. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:5). Many a person is willing to acknowledge his being a sinner like everybody else, but when it comes to honestly admitting his PERSONAL sins, that is altogether another matter. Here is the reason why so few people repent of their sin. They confess only to universal sin instead of their own filthy, contemptible personal sins.

Remember, it is not universal sin that sinners will admit at the Great White Throne Judgment; they will be judged according to their personal works. This we read in Revelation 20:13: ". . . and they were judged every man according to their works."

It is true that we all are sinners. Romans 3:23 confirms it: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." I would take you a bit further down the road in regard to this matter of sin. Yes, Man is a sinner by birth; he is not responsible for this. Man becomes a slave to sin by voluntary yielding to the dictates of sin.

He is now a sinner by personal practice. His yielding to sin is the act of his own will. The Bible so informs us in Romans 6:16: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness?" Now notice the wording, "ye yield yourselves." This is our course of action. Sinners do it also as it states, "of sin unto death."

Friend, it's your own personal sin that will damn you forever from the presence of God. Our churches are filled with people who have confessed Adam's universal sin. No wonder they don't turn from their sin in repentance. They have acknowledged only universal sin instead of their own personal filthiness in the sight of a holy God. Only the Holy Spirit can reveal sin and convict us of its filth and consequences.

## **The Sin Question**

We never come in contact with the holy Son of God until we have acknowledged our sin, turned to God, and cried out for forgiveness. Since faith is the gift of God, don't for one moment entertain the misconception that God is going to give faith to an unrepentant, filthy sinner, to have personal fellowship with His holy Son. It will never be! Christ is not separating us from God. It is not the Son question! It is our sin that keeps us apart from His holy Person. This I read in Isaiah 59:2: "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

Sin is an act, the violation of, or the lack of obedience to, the revealed Word of God. Sin is the absence of righteousness. Sin is enmity against God.

## **Transgression of Command**

Sin is the transgression of a divine command: "But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me" (Hosea 6:7). Transgression signified the breaking of a known command or going beyond assigned limits. This was Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. He overstepped certain limits established by divine command.

## **Denial of the Divine Right**

Sin is lawlessness or spiritual anarchy. Listen to I Timothy 1:9: "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers." It is a serious crime to deny God His right of control over us. We are actually depriving God of His supremacy.

## **The Divine Standard**

Sin is missing the mark and coming short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Listen to I John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law." Sin is the failure to attain to divine standards. God has provided adequate provision, but we have deliberately refused to allow His standard to be met in our lives by refusing His grace and love as communicated to us through His Son, Jesus Christ.

## **Sin Is a Lie**

It started on the earth in the Garden with the question of divine veracity: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the Garden?" Sin has its origin in the father of lies. Listen to John 8:44: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

## Sin Is Separation

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). The sinner is not only separated from God here and now, but is dying in sin, eternally separated from God. Revelation 20:15 states the fact this way, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast unto the lake of fire."

## Sin Is Darkness

"In Him (Christ) was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:4,5). Sin shuns the light, lest its true nature be revealed. Listen to John 3:19,20: "And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

## Sin Is Perversion

Sin twists man's thoughts of God and His law. Listen to Isaiah 64:6: "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

## Sin Is Emptiness

Sin leaves us without an audience with God or any of His eternal benefits. Listen to Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

## Sin Is Servitude

Romans 6:23 states that "The wages of sin is death." Sin is bitter and difficult servitude, with eventual death as our wages. Listen to Psalm 139:23,24: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

## Sin Corrupts the Soul

"And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Genesis 6:12). Here is described the vile condition of rot according to the Hebrew language. How sad to realize that today's poor concept of divine holiness has robbed us of a deep consciousness of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Listen to Psalm 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good."

## Sin Produces Guilt

The result of sin is plainly taught in the Word of God. Proverbs 14:9 states, "Fools make a mock of sin, but among the righteous there is favour." Hear Ezekiel 18:4: "Behold all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Always remember that man's concept of sin has a direct bearing upon his comprehension of the need and nature of salvation. We will never have any desire for God's deliverance until we comprehend the loathsomeness of our abominable sin that God hates and will certainly judge. The Holy Spirit presents Christ, who is able to counteract the evil of Satan within us. Who needs the Savior but a lost, guilty, and condemned sinner? To fail to understand our helplessness and sinful condition is to be forever removed from Christ's willingness to cleanse us from sin. Only the person who is a sinner, and convinced so by the Holy Spirit through the revelation of

the holiness of God, through the Word, will cry out for deliverance. Listen to Christ's purpose in I John 3:5,8: "And ye know that he (Christ) was manifested to take away our sins . . . For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

## Deliverance from Sin

Friend, have you been saved from your sins? Notice I said FROM your sins! Christ did not come to save you in spite of your sins. Sin is not a sickness or a weakness; sin is deliberate open hostility against the known will of God. Are you guilty? Do you think for one moment that you will take your sin to heaven with you? God has provided cleansing for the sinner and continual cleansing for the saint.

Jesus Christ paid the penalty for your sins on Calvary's cross. Have you presented your sins to Him? Have you turned to God and asked Him to forgive the sins you have named to Him? As a sinner you cannot meet God. You must meet His Son on the cross. God can forgive you because Christ takes all of your deserved punishment. Christ provides the righteousness that a holy God demands. "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe, for there is no difference" (Romans 3:22).

Have you allowed God to reveal sin to your personal consciousness? Find a place of prayer and name your sins to God. In repentance turn to God and cry out for forgiveness. "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:5). Trust God for faith to believe Christ to cleanse you. It is a gift from God and not the result of your efforts. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: IT IS THE GIFT of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

Honesty on your part will start the chain reaction that will eventually find you adopted into the family of God. It will be His work within you. Have you come to the end of yourself? Good! Talk direct to God. Have a personal conversation with Jesus Christ. He is the only Person Who can save you. You have only one thing to give Him — your sin. He gives you grace, faith, and all else needed to satisfy a holy God, Who longs to shower eternal blessing upon you. God's desire for you is recorded in Ephesians 2:7: "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness towards us through Christ Jesus."

Hear the angel: "For to you is born this day in the city of David, a SAVIOUR WHICH IS CHRIST THE LORD" (Luke 2:11). Have you believed Him to be your personal Savior from YOUR personal sins?

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