

The Mind of Christ What Jesus Said About Sin - Part One

INTRODUCTION:

- I. One of the greatest problems we all face is the futility, the utter degradation and helplessness we experience when confronted with our sins.
 - A. It seems that no matter how hard we try – no matter how earnest we are to live our lives righteously before the God of heaven – we find it impossible to keep from sinning very long.
 1. We either face the frustrations of wavering back and forth between right and wrong, or we find ourselves giving up completely and going back into the world.
 - B. Before Jesus came into the world with His message of hope (the “*gospel*” – “good news”), people were wandering through life with no real direction, and no real solutions to the age-old problem of sin.
 1. The apostle Paul tells us that EVERYONE faces this problem of falling victim to sin.
 - a. In **Romans 3:10-18**, the apostle Paul shows that both Jew and Gentile are all under the same condemnation of sin – “*As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable;*

there is none who does good, no, not one. Their throat is an open tomb; with their tongues they have practiced deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

(1). The apostle Paul was trying to get across the idea that
NO ONE CONSISTENTLY does good – “no, not one.”
This means that EVERYONE, regardless of how good they are, will eventually sin.

- b. In **Romans 3:23**, the apostle Paul concludes – “*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” This means “*all have sinned*” (past tense) and “*fall short of the glory of God*” (present tense).
- c. Finally, in **Romans 7:14-25**, Paul seems to describe the same frustrations we all encounter while trying to live a godly life – “*For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is*

good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God; through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”

- (1). Some argue that Paul is describing his life BEFORE he became a Christian, saying that Paul could not be “sold under sin” or that sin could not be dwelling in Paul the Christian.
- (2). But the struggle Paul describes here is all too familiar to everyone – even to the Christian who must admit there

are times when *“for the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice.”*

- II. Jesus was thoroughly familiar with the sins of this world – He came into the world to personally do battle with Satan, and to fight against sin.
 - A. And yet, as devastating as sin is, Jesus knew something else – He knew we could win the VICTORY over Satan and over sin.
 - 1. Jesus had complete confidence in our ability to conquer the power of evil THROUGH HIM – that is, IF we are willing to accept the solution He offers.
 - 2. But for us to eventually win the victory over sin we first need to understand how to identify sin in our lives.
 - B. Sadly, far too many people (including Christians) go through life denying they are infected with this terrible disease.
 - 1. But just as denying a physical disease will only make matters worse, denying the disease of sin in our lives will eventually result in the worst kind of death possible, SPIRITUAL DEATH, and all the eternal consequences that go along with it.
 - 2. So, before we talk about the CURE for sin, let’s first learn how to IDENTIFY the DISEASE.

- C. When Jesus taught about the subject of sin, He saw that it actually operates in three spheres or areas – sins that were **INWARD**, sins that are **OUTWARD**, and sins that are **UPWARD**.
 - 1. Let's take a few minutes to look at these three areas where sin not only affects our lives, but the lives of others, and ultimately, our relationship with God.

BODY:

- I. First, Jesus taught that there are sins that affect OURSELVES – sins that are **INWARD**.
 - A. To Jesus, sin is a failure to be what we can be, and what we OUGHT to be.
 - 1. The most common word for “*sin*” in the New Testament is the Greek word “*hamartia*” (ha-mar-TEE-ah).
 - a. It was a term that was most commonly used in archery. It simply means “missing the mark,” or “missing the target.”
 - b. There are two ways we can miss the target.
 - (1). One way we can “miss the mark” is when we WANT to hit the target, we AIM at it, but because we lack the necessary skills, we MISS it. Perhaps this is the kind of

“missing the mark” that Paul described in Romans chapter 7.

(2). The other way we can “miss the mark” is because we become COMPLACIENT and simply shoot – not really caring whether or not we even HIT the target.

2. Jesus had this idea of complacency in mind when he taught two of his most important parables about the subject of sin.

(1). **Matthew 25:14-30** – In the Parable of the Talents (A talent was a certain sum of money), Jesus described one man who failed to use what had been given to him.

(a). The Master knew the ability of each servant, and gave each servant’s a responsibility to fulfill based on each man’s abilities. But one man refused to accept his Master’s evaluation of his ability and failed to do as his Master had commanded.

(b). How many times does this describe us – where the Lord gives each of us a certain amount of “talents” and abilities, and we refuse to accept the LORD’S evaluation of our abilities, and simply DO NOTHING to fulfill His commands? We fail to USE what the Lord has given us.

(2). **Luke 13:6-9** – In the Parable of the Fig Tree, the Lord describes a tree which, in spite of all its advantages, still **STUBBORNLY REFUSED** to bear fruit, and was in danger of being destroyed.

(a). How many times does this describe US – where the Lord has generously given us advantage after advantage, and blessing after blessing, and we still **STUBBORNLY REFUSE** to be fruitful? We fail to use what the Lord has given us.

3. The striking lesson Jesus was trying to teach His disciples on so many occasions was that we will **NOT** be judged so much by what we **ARE** or what we **HAVE**, but rather by **HOW WE USE WHAT WE HAVE!**

a. That ought to be a very sobering thought to every one of us. We need to realize that we will someday stand before God and answer for **HOW WE USED WHAT HE GAVE US** in the form of our talents and abilities, as well as in the form of our material possessions.

II. Jesus also saw that there are sins that affect **OTHERS**. These are sins where we have failed in personal relationships – sins that are **OUTWARD**.

A. There are several kinds of sins that affect others – but let's look at TWO of the MOST COMMON:

1. First, there are sins where we fail to RESPOND to, or REACT to, the NEEDS OF OTHERS.

a. **Luke 10:25-37** – In the Parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus was confronted by a lawyer who tested Jesus asking *“what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”*

(1). When Jesus asked Him how he understood the

Scriptures, the lawyer quoted from the Law which said,

“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,” and “your neighbor as yourself.”

(2). After Jesus commended him for answering correctly, the lawyer smugly asked, *“And who is my neighbor?”*

(3). Jesus responded by teaching the parable of the Good Samaritan in which two religious persons (one a priest, the other a Levite) refused to help a man who had been robbed and beaten. It was only a Samaritan who showed compassion and mercy on the man.

(a). The average Jew looked down on the Samaritans as renegade Jews who had intermarried with the pagan

world, and who had long ago compromised and corrupted the TRUE worship of Jehovah

(4). The question Jesus asked at the conclusion of the parable was “*which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?*” The lawyer had asked the wrong question. He wanted to know who was HIS neighbor. But Jesus said WE need to be the one who is a neighbor to others.

b. Being a neighbor means responding to the needs of others – having compassion on them, and being willing to help them during times when they are not able to help themselves. Failure to do that is failure to be a “*neighbor.*”

2. Second, there are sins where we also fail to have PITY and FORGIVE others.

a. **Matthew 18:21-35** – Peter came to Jesus asking how many times should he forgive someone, and assumed the Lord would agree with the belief that we needed to forgive someone up to 7 times.

(1). This belief was based on a misunderstanding of what the Lord taught in Amos chapters 1 and 2 – where the Lord said of each city He was about to destroy, “*For three*

transgressions of (the city's name is then inserted), *and for four, I will not turn away its punishment...*" Most Jewish rabbis concluded that Jehovah would forgive up to seven times. But after the SEVENTH sin, judgment would come.

(2). However, Jesus told Peter he should be willing to forgive an unlimited number of times – *"I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."*

(3). He then proceeded to teach a parable about a man who owed a king an enormous debt he could not repay. After the king forgave him of everything, the man refused to forgive another servant who owed him only a small debt, casting him into prison until the debt was paid. When the king learned of this, he had the first man arrested and thrown into prison for being unmerciful, and the king demanded full payment of EVERYTHING the unmerciful servant owed.

b. When we harbor a grudge and refuse to forgive others, we sin. God doesn't keep track of the number of times WE sin against Him, and neither should WE keep score of the sins of others against us – sins against us cannot possibly be greater than our sins against God.

(1). In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught a lesson on prayer and said that if we are not willing to forgive others, neither can we expect to be forgiven.

(2). **Matthew 6:14-15** – *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*

III. Finally, Jesus also saw that there are sins that DIRECTLY affect God.

Certainly ALL sin is against God. But Jesus saw that some sins are SPECIFICALLY directed against God's GRACE and MERCY – these are those sins that are **UPWARD**.

A. These are sins where we deliberately choose to do things OUR WAY rather than GOD'S WAY – sins that are aimed directly against God's love.

1. **Luke 15:25-32** – In the parable of the Prodigal Son, Jesus showed a young man who was living in the comfort of the father's house, but who wasn't satisfied.

a. This young man wanted to take his inheritance and leave.

- (1). He had absolutely no regard for his father, and no regard for his brother – in fact, he wanted to get as far away from them as he could.
 - (2). Neither did this young man have any regard for his inheritance – an inheritance his father had worked hard to provide for each of his sons. This young man took all his father had given him and blew it!
 - (a). He had no regard for the one who GAVE him the inheritance. The only thing he cared about was what the inheritance could GIVE HIM – a chance to live his life HIS way, and fulfill all HIS sensual desires.
 - b. When we carelessly DISREGARD all the blessings God has given us – blessings of a sound mind, good health, the ability to earn a decent living, prosperity and material wealth – when we disregard these blessings, or when we USE THEM to simply satisfy our OWN WANTS and DESIRES, we sin against God.
 - (1). If we disregard these blessings, or use them inappropriately, don't be surprised if the Lord takes them back, and leaves us with nothing.
2. **Luke 14:16-24** – Jesus taught a parable about a man who invited several people to a great feast.

- a. These guests were being invited to the feast out of loving-kindness.
- (1). The host wanted to honor these guests with a great feast – he wanted to express his love for them, to let them share in his own bountiful blessings, and to share a time of joy and happiness in his home.
 - (2). But one by one, these guests made one excuse after another – each one was more interested in taking care of their OWN needs and fulfilling the desires of OTHERS than they were in accepting the gracious invitation of this host.
 - (3). Therefore, the host considered them unworthy of being invited to share in the great feast, and sent his servants out to invite those who would show more appreciation – the *“poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.”*
- b. How many times has the Lord invited us to share in the blessings He so freely offers through His Son Jesus Christ, and we turn down the Lord’s invitation?
- (1). How many times has the Lord invited us to ASSEMBLE and WORSHIP Him and His Son – to SING praises to His name for all He has done for us, to express to Him our greatest needs in PRAYER, to spend time listening to His

divinely inspired WORD, and to COMMUNE with Him in memory of the great sacrifice His Son paid for each and every one of us – how many times has the Lord invited us to this great feast, and we make one excuse after another for not coming?

(2). When we reject the gracious GIFTS God has given us, and we reject His INVITATION to come to enjoy fellowship with Him and with His people, it is as though we slap God in the face.

c. Have you ever given someone a gift – something precious to you, or something that had great sentimental value to you – only to have the one who receives the gift show no appreciation at all?

(1). It hurt, didn't it?

d. The same thing happens when we BLANTANTLY turn down and REJECT the gifts God gives us – it breaks His heart.

3. That's why we need to always remember that our sins are not so much a SIN AGAINST THE LAW, as much as they are a SIN AGAINST GOD'S LOVE. When we sin, it's not so much THE LAW that we break, it's GOD'S HEART that we break!

CONCLUSION:

- I. When we look at these three areas where we all sin – sins that affect OURSELVES, sins that affect our relationship with OTHERS, and sins that are directly against GOD – we need to realize that sin is really an effort to dethrone God and to enthrone ourselves.
 - A. Sin is essentially taking OUR WAY over GOD’S WAY.
 1. We are saying, “it’s MY LIFE, and I can live it any way I choose.”
 2. Nothing could be further from the truth. It’s NOT our life. We DON’T belong to ourselves. We belong to the Lord.
 - a. This is why in **1 Corinthians 6:18-20** the apostle Paul wrote, *“Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and **you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.**”*
 - B. The sad thing is that if we keep rejecting the Lord’s right to rule and reign in our lives, we will eventually become so hardened that we will eventually get to the point where we have no feelings toward the Lord at all – we will become “*past feeling.*”

1. The apostle Paul warned about this kind of situation in **Ephesians 4:17-19** when he wrote – *“This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart; who, **being past feeling**, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”*
 - a. Every medical authority knows that when a sick or injured patient no longer feels pain, death is imminent.
 - b. The same thing can happen to those who become “*past feeling*” spiritually.

- II. There is no better time to turn AWAY FROM sins that are INWARD, OUTWARD, and UPWARD than right now.
 - A. We have all “*sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (**Romans 3:23**).
 1. But Jesus came to the earth to live among us, and die on the cross so that we could be forgiven of every sins we’ve committed, if we will only accept the gift of salvation God is extending to each.
 - a. For those who are not a Christian ...
 - b. For those who are a child of God, but need to repent ...