

## The Mind of Christ What Jesus Said About Sin - Part Two

### INTRODUCTION:

- I. The teaching of Jesus on the subject of sin was TRULY revolutionary – NOT ONLY from the standpoint that we could eventually WIN the victory over sin, but from other standpoints as well.
  - A. For example, Jesus taught that it wasn't JUST the rebellious and disobedient who were in need of forgiveness – even the so-called “RIGHTEOUS” folks need forgiveness of sin.
    1. As far as Jesus was concerned, even people like you and me – people who, as they say, “GO TO CHURCH” all the time – have problems with sin. The only problem is that we don't really like to THINK of ourselves as sinners.
      - a. It's easy for us to spot people in the WORLD engaging in sin – the world is FULL of sin.
        - (1). **1 John 2:16** – the apostle John wrote: *“For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world.”*
      - b. But what about us – what are the sins we “CHURCH-GOING” folks commit?

- B. As we continue looking into the Mind of Christ, let's turn our attention to the sins that are most commonly found among those of us who are Christians – sins that Jesus said RELIGIOUS folk need to guard against, NOT ONLY because are these sins so PREVALENT among God's people, but also because they're the most DIFFICULT to detect.

**BODY:**

- I. First, among the sins that Jesus seemed to consider most serious, was the sin of SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS – the sin of SELF-RIGHTEOUS PRIDE.

A. **Luke 18:9-14** – Jesus taught a parable to those *“who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.”* It was a parable about a Pharisee and a tax collector who both went up to the Temple to pray.

1. Let's take a closer look at these two men – first, let's consider the Pharisee.
  - a. Pharisees were a sect of the Jews in the days of Jesus who considered themselves as GUARDIANS OF THE TRUTH – they had a long history of defending the truth of God's Laws against EVERY INTRUSION of error – ESPECIALLY against the philosophies of the Greeks that were commonly held by another sect of the Jews, the Sadducees.

- b. The word “Pharisee” means “the Separate Ones.”  
Unfortunately, they considered themselves to be the ONLY RIGHTEOUS ones among the Jews of their day – much like an island surrounded by a sea of sinners.
- c. Because of this, Jesus says they “*trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.*” (v. 9) They were nothing more than arrogant, high-minded hypocrites.
- d. Notice what the Lord says about THIS Pharisee:
- (1). First, he “*stood and prayed thus with himself*” – his prayers never went any higher than the ceiling. (v. 11)
  - (2). Second, he confessed sins he was NOT GUILTY OF – extortion, being unjust, adultery. (v. 11) It’s easy to confess sins we’re NOT guilty of, but what about the sins we ARE guilty of?
  - (3). Third, he believed he was pleasing to God because of his acts of super-religious service – “*I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.*” (v. 12) There are two things wrong with this:
    - (a). First, fasting under the Law of Moses was only REQUIRED on the Day of Atonement (**Leviticus 16:29-31**) – One time a year, not **104 TIMES** a year!

(b). Second, the Lord never expected tithes of ALL we possess. But the Pharisee would go so far as to even count out 1/10th of the mint, anise, and cumin seeds in his spice rack while neglecting the *“WEIGHTIER matters of the law: JUSTICE and MERCY and FAITH.”* (cf. **Matthew 23:23**)

2. Now, notice what the Lord said about the tax collector.
  - a. Tax collectors were absolutely despised by the common Jew. Tax collectors not only worked for Rome, but they BOUGHT their way into becoming a tax collector, where many resorted to EXTORTION and BRIBERY when collecting taxes – some for Rome, and some for themselves. So, generally speaking, they were considered no better than a common THIEF.
  - b. But THIS tax collector was different. THREE THINGS stand out about his character – all found in **verse 13**.
    - (1). First, he had GENUINE, AUTHENTIC HUMILITY – he was *“standing afar off,”* and *“would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven.”* (v. 13) He KNEW he was a sinner – no one had to tell him. And he felt unworthy to even BE in the presence of God.

- (2). Second, he demonstrated GENUINE repentance – he “beat himself upon the breast.” **(v. 13)**
- (3). Third, he had a REALISTIC concept of his own sinful condition before God **(v. 13)** – he simply prayed, “*God be merciful to me a [some translations say “**the**”] sinner*” -- as if he were the only sinner in the world.

3. Jesus concluded by saying, “*I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.*” **(v. 14)**

B. **Luke 7:36-50** – We have another story – the story of a woman who was a sinner (some commentators call “a woman of the streets” – more than likely a prostitute). She came to Jesus while He was having dinner in the house of Simon the Pharisee.

1. It was common in that day for well-known traveling preachers or teachers to be invited to dinner at the house of the most prestigious members of the local community.
  - a. The honored guest would generally sit, reclining at a table, with his feet behind him.
  - b. While he dined, people from the community were allowed to enter the area where the teacher was dining so they could

have an opportunity to hear anything he might say. On this occasion, among the people who gathered to hear Jesus, was a woman who is simply identified as a “sinner.”

2. As Jesus sat reclining, this woman, who was standing behind Him, began crying – her tears rolling down her cheeks and falling one by one on the feet of Jesus.
  - a. She immediately knelt down and began wiping away her tears with her hair while she tenderly kissed His feet. Then she took out an Alabaster flash of costly, fragrant oil, and proceeded to anoint the Savior’s feet. The fragrance must have filled the air with a beautiful aroma.
3. Simon the Pharisee was **INCENSED** at the **BOLDNESS** of this woman, and **EVEN MORE** troubled by Jesus in allowing a “sinner” to touch Him – especially since Jesus claimed to be a teacher from God!
  - a. But you see, Simon was a typical Pharisee – who *“trusted in themselves that **THEY** were righteous, and despised **OTHERS.**”*
4. Reading Simon’s thoughts, Jesus proceeded to tell a parable about two debtors. **(vs. 41-42)**
  - a. Jesus said, *“One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.”* And yet, neither had the ability to repay their debt.

- b. Therefore, the creditor forgave them both.
  - c. Jesus then asked, *“Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?” (v. 42b)*
  - d. Simon correctly guessed, the one whom the creditor forgave the most.
5. Then Jesus proceeded to draw the parallel between the parable and Simon and this sinful woman.
- a. **Luke 7:44-47** – *Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. 45 You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. 46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. 47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.”*
  - b. Simon never showed Jesus any honor by washing the Savior’s feet when He entered Simon’s house; he never gave Jesus the customary greeting of a kiss, and he never offered the Savior a kind of scented oil that any honored guest would

receive to anoint his head and refresh himself from the heat of the day.

- b. And yet, the woman (the “sinner”) washed the Savior’s feet with her tears. Not only that, she kissed His feet, and anointed His feet with a VERY costly perfumed oil contained in an Alabaster vile that, in most cases, could only be used once.
- c. It was the WOMAN who CLEARLY loved Jesus more, because she had more to be FORGIVEN.

6. Although Simon may have been only a FIFTY denarii debtor, and the sinful woman a FIVE HUNDRED denarii debtor, the point Jesus was trying to make is that they were BOTH DEBTORS – they BOTH OWED DEBTS they couldn’t repay – both Simon AND the woman.

- a. The problem was that Simon didn’t SEE himself as a DEBTOR – he didn’t see himself as needing ANY forgiveness AT ALL!
- b. Therefore, **(vs. 48-50)** Jesus turned to the woman and said, *“Your sins are forgiven.” And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, ‘Who is this who even forgives sins?’ Then He said to the woman, ‘Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.’”*

7. Like so many self-righteous Pharisees, Simon thought he was ALREADY SAVED – he believed he had been justified by all his ACTS OF RELIGIOUS SERVICE.
8. Sadly, he failed to see himself as a DEBTOR – one whose debt of sin could NEVER be repaid on the basis of his own good works.
  - a. We're saved by God's GRACE and MERCY, through the BLOOD OF CHRIST – not simply because we “go to church,” and do all the “right things.”
  - b. DON'T MISUNDERSTAND what I'm saying here! Being a member of the body of Christ and faithfully serving the Lord are ABSOLUTELY necessary.
  - c. But never forget – NONE of us have been saved by our OWN good WORKS. We've been saved by the BLOOD OF CHRIST, and by the GRACE and MERCY of God.
  - d. Therefore, NONE of us have the right to look down our religious noses at ANY sinner. And do you know why? It's because the apostle Paul tells us, “*We have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” (**Romans 3:23**)
  - e. We're sinners too!

- II. Another sin Jesus condemned was the sin of EXTERNALISM –  
OUTWARDLY complying with the Commandments of the Lord, while  
INWARDLY remaining cold and indifferent to the cause of Christ.
  - A. In the seventh chapter of Mark we find perhaps the most BLATANT  
example of EXTERNALISM in the entire New Testament. **(Mark 7:1-23)**
    - 1. The Pharisees were ALWAYS looking for opportunities to condemn  
and criticize Jesus and His disciples for being lawbreakers – not  
breakers of GOD'S Laws, but breakers of man-made TRADITIONS  
handed down from generation to generation, and considered  
EQUAL with the Law.
      - a. On this occasion, the Pharisees condemned the disciples of  
Jesus for eating bread without FIRST washing their hands “*IN  
A SPECIAL WAY*” (v. 3) – literally, “with the fist.”
        - (1). In fact, the Pharisees had a whole RITUAL associated  
with the ceremonial washing of ALL kinds of things – NOT  
for the purpose of sanitizing them and making them free  
of infectious contamination, but to make them  
CEREMONIALLY CLEAN!
    - 2. **Mark 7:6-7** – Jesus immediately pointed out their OWN hypocrisy.  
Quoting from the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, Jesus said, “*This  
people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.*”

*And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”*

- a. The Pharisees were guilty of paying “LIP SERVICE” to Jehovah, while their HEARTS were far from Him.
    - (1). They may have been doing all the right things EXTERNALLY, but their devotion to God was HYPOCRITICAL and SUPERFICIAL.
    - (2). INTERNALLY, there was no real love and commitment to the Lord at all.
  - b. Furthermore, their worship to Jehovah was VAIN, because they were more concerned in keeping their TRADITIONS than they were in keeping the commandments of the Lord.
3. To further expose their hypocrisy, Jesus gave an example of how they found loop-holes to keep from doing what the Lord commanded.
- a. **Vs. 10-13** – Jesus told them, *“For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother;’ and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban” – (that is, a gift to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making*

*the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”*

- b. They convinced themselves it was MORE important to drop a few dollars in the collection plate than it was to take care of their aged father and mother. (They didn't have Social Security and Medicare in those days.)
  - c. Their REAL motive was NOT to put God first. Their REAL motive was to pay a few dollars to the Temple treasury each month, and then feel COMPLETELY JUSTIFIED in telling Mom and Dad, “Sorry, there's nothing left for you!”
4. Jesus wanted His disciples – as well as these Pharisees – to know that the cleanliness of a man's HANDS doesn't matter AT ALL. What REALLY matters is the cleanliness of a man's HEART (his MIND; his SOUL; his SPIRIT).
- a. The things we put in our MOUTH are not going to corrupt our HEART.
  - b. But the things that enter a man's HEART (his MIND) – entering through the eyes and the ears – THESE are the things that corrupt a man.
  - c. **Vs. 21-23** – It is from within, out of the HEART that “*evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye,*

*blasphemy, pride, foolishness” come. And Jesus said, “All these evil things come from within and defile a man.”*

5. Sadly, there are some today who believe that as long as they're doing all the right things EXTERNALLY, it doesn't matter about the condition of their heart.
  - a. For example, there are many who believe:
    - (1). As long as they are a MEMBER of the Lord's CHURCH, they've got an AUTOMATIC TICKET to heaven, and don't need to worry about attending every time the doors are open, or teaching the lost, or exhorting those who have fallen away, or caring for the needs of their brothers and sisters in Christ.
    - (2). As long as they come to church all the time, they can sit in judgment of everybody else who isn't as FAITHFUL or as RELIGIOUS as they are.
  - b. Some of us are going to be VERY surprised on the Day of Judgment when we discover that the Lord won't be looking so much at the EXTERNAL things we've done, as much as He's going to examine the INTERNAL condition of our HEART.

**CONCLUSION:**

- I. Hopefully, all this should begin to help us see the TRUE concept of sin that Jesus was trying to get His disciples to see. Jesus saw sin as an attitude of the HEART. A person's OUTWARD actions may be BEYOND REPROACH, but the INWARD attitude of his heart is what REALLY matters.
  - A. **Matthew 5:21-28** – In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus made it perfectly clear we can be doing all the right things OUTWARDLY, but still be guilty of sin because of the INWARD condition of our HEART.
    1. **Vs. 21-22** – The Law says we MUST NOT KILL (meaning we shall not “commit murder”). But Jesus says we must not even BE ANGRY with a brother.
      - a. I'm sure we can ALL raise our hands in saying we've never committed murder. But how many hands will still be raised when we ask how many of us have ever been ANGRY toward another?
    2. **Vs. 27-28** – Jesus also said the Law says we must not COMMIT ADULTERY. But Jesus says we must not even LUST in our hearts.
      - a. Hopefully, we could all raise our hands and say we've never committed adultery. But how many of us can keep our hands up if we ask if you've ever had an unclean or lustful thought?
  - B. The Law of God CLEARLY condemns COMMITTING sin.

1. But Jesus revolutionized this concept by teaching that it's ALSO a sin to even THINK INWARDLY the thoughts that lead to COMMIT THE SIN OURWARDLY.
  2. It's the INWARD ATTITUDE OF THE HEART that matters.
- C. What's the condition of your heart?
1. Are there sins lurking in the dark recesses of YOUR heart – sins you try to keep hidden from others – even though you know you can't hide them from God?
  2. If there are, isn't it time you did something about them?