

Week Three

Quarter 2

Sin

The Covenants Between God and Man

Outline

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Definition of Sin

- Sin is any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, attitude, or nature (Ex 20:1-17, Ex 20:17)
 - Give examples of each
- Desire to steal or commit adultery=sin in God's sight, Desire to sin=sin (Mat 5:22, Mat 5:28)
- Not correct to say that all feelings, attitudes are morally neutral (Psa 19:14, Gal 5:20, Rom 5:8, Eph 2:3)
- Some say that the essence of sin is selfishness
 - Scripture does not define it this way
 - Jesus commanded us to “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matt 6:20)
 - We seek salvation
 - Christian hedonism?
 - There is sin that is not selfishness
 - Self-less sacrifice to an idol
 - God seeks His own glory, but does not sin in doing so
 - Scriptural view of sin (1 John 3:4)

The Origin of Sin (1)

- Remember that God does not sin nor should ever be blamed for sin (Deu 32:4, Job 34:10)
 - We chose to sin with willful, voluntary choices
 - See Chapter 15 (Creation)
- Also, it is wrong to say there is an eternally existing evil power in the universe similar to or equal to God Himself in power (Eph 1:11)
 - This was called Dualism
 - See Chapter 16 (God's Providence)
- Even before the disobedience of Adam and Eve, sin was present in the angelic world
 - The fall of Satan and the demons
 - See Chapter 20 (Satan and demons)

The Origin of Sin (2)

- With respect to humans, the first sin was that of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3:1-19)
- The story is typical of sin in many ways
 - Sin was struck at the basis for knowledge (What is true?)
 - God: If you eat, you will die
 - Serpent: you will not die
 - Eve: Decided to doubt God's words (conduct experiment to see if true or decided: not true)
 - Their sin struck at the basis for moral standards (What is right?)
 - God: Do not eat fruit
 - Serpent: Eat the fruit (be like God)
 - Eve: Trusted her own evaluation of what would be right
 - Good for food
 - Delight to the eyes
 - Desired to make one wise

The Origin of Sin (3)

- Their sin gave a different answer to the question (Who am I?)
 - God: Adam and Eve were creatures
 - Adam and Eve: To be like God
- All sin is ultimately irrational
 - Did not make sense for Satan to rebel against God or for Adam and Eve to think disobeying God would bring gain (Psa 14:1, Pro 10:23)
 - “Though people sometimes persuade themselves that they have good reasons for sinning ... sin ultimately just does not make sense” (pg 493)

Historical Truth or Fairytale?

- Can the story of Adam and Eve be taken literally, or is it simply a tale describing conceptually the origin of sin
 - Genesis never makes a transition between these events and events such as Abraham who archeologists and historians agree upon as being a real person
 - New Testament authors treat it as historical truth
 - “sin came into the world through one man” (Rom 5:12)
 - “the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning” (2 Cor 11:3)
- See Chapter 5 (the Inerrancy of Scripture)

The Doctrine of Inherited Sin

- Often known as “Original Sin”
- We have inherited guilt – we are counted guilty because of Adam’s sin
 - “therefore...sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned” (Rom 5:12)
 - God thought of us all as having sinned when Adam disobeyed
 - “Sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come” (Rom 5:13-14)

Inherited Guilt (cont)

- “Then as one man’s trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man’s act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as *by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners*, so by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous. (Rom 5:18-19)
- When Adam sinned, God thought of all who would descend from Adam as sinners (pg 494)
- How else could this be true? → “while we were yet sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8)
- All members of the human race were represented by Adam in the time of testing in the Garden of Eden. As our representative, Adam sinned, and God counted us guilty as well as Adam. (pg 495)

Is it “Fair” That Adam Represented Us?

- Everyone who protests this has also voluntarily committed many actual sins for which God also holds us guilty (Rom 2:6, Col 3:25)
- Some argue: “If you were there in Adam’s place, you would have sinned as he did” as demonstrated in mankind’s subsequent rebellion
 - This one assumes a lot about what would or would not happen
- If we think that such representation is unfair, then we should also think it unfair that Christ acts in the same way, imputing His righteousness to us through His act of sacrifice (Rom 5:12-21)
 - “As by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man’s obedience many will be made righteous” (Rom 5:19)

Inherited Corruption

- We have a sinful nature because of Adam's sin
 - NOTE: This does not mean that all human beings are as bad as they could be
 - Even unbelievers do much good
- David realized he was sinful from the very beginning:
 - Have mercy on *me*, O God
 - ...blot out *my* transgressions.
 - Wash *me* thoroughly from *my* iniquity.
 - ...I know *my* transgressions.
 - ...Against You...have *I* sinned.
 - Behold, *I* was brought forth in iniquity,
 - and in sin did my mother conceive *me*. (Ps 51:1-5)
- Before we were Christians, “we were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind” (Eph 2:3)
- Anyone who has raised kids will tell you that they are disobedient and selfish from the very beginning

In Our Natures We Totally Lack Spiritual Good Before God

- Every aspect of our being is affected by sin
 - Intellects, emotions, desires, hearts, goals, motives, physical bodies, etc.
 - Calvinists call this “total depravity”
- “I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh” (Rom 7:18)
- “to the corrupt and unbelieving nothing is pure; their very minds are consciences are corrupted” (Titus 1:15)
- Scripture is not denying that unbelievers can do good in human society in some senses. But it is denying that they can do any spiritual good or be good in terms of a relationship with God. (pg 497)

In Our Actions We Are Totally Unable to Do Spiritual Good Before God

- We lack the ability to do anything that will in itself please God and the ability to come to God in our own strength
- “those who are in the flesh cannot please God” (Rom 8:8)
- “Apart from Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5)
- “without faith it is impossible to please Him” (Heb 11:6)
- “You were dead through the trespasses and sins in which you once walked” (Eph 1:1-2) → a state of bondage to sin
- “every one who commits sin is a slave to sin” (John 8:34)
- “all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment” (Is 64:6)

- Because of their (unbelievers) inability to do good and to escape from their fundamental rebellion against God and their fundamental preference for sin, unbelievers do not have freedom in the most important sense of freedom – that is, the freedom to do right, and to do what is pleasing to God. (pg 498)

Actual Sins in Our Lives

- All people are sinful before God
 - “They have all gone astray, they are all alike corrupt; there is none that does good, no, not one” (Ps 14:3)
 - “No man living is righteous before you” (Ps 143:2)
 - “All men, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, as it is written: ‘None is righteous, no, not one.’” (Rom 3:9-10)
 - “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom 3:23)
 - “If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8)
- Does our ability limit our responsibility?
 - No!
 - “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matt 5:48)

Are Infants Guilty Before They Commit Actual Sins?

- Inherited sin → we have a sinful nature before the time of birth
- Can they be saved?
 - Not of their own merits
 - Salvation is possible in the same way it is to adults – through the redemptive act of Jesus
- Do we see scripture support such acts?
 - Gabriel said that John the Baptist “will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb” (Luke 1:15)
 - “Since my mother bore me you have been my God” (Ps 22:10)
 - God is able to save infants in an unusual way, apart from their hearing and understanding the gospel, by bringing regeneration to them very early, sometimes even before birth (pg 500)
- This is not the usual way for God to save people, yet God frequently chose to save the children of those who believe in Him
 - Noah’s family (Gen 7:1, Heb 11:7), Rahab’s family (Josh 2:18), The Nobleman’s family (John 4:53), the families of those who believed while listening to Peter’s sermon on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:39), Ps 103:17, Acts 16:31, 18:8; 1 Cor 1:16, 7:14; Titus 1:6
 - David said “I shall go to him, but he will not return to me” (2 Sam 12:23) when speaking of his child who had just died

Are There Degrees of Sin? (1)

- Legal guilt (legal standing before God)
 - Adam and Eve learned it the garden that one act of disobedience results in the penalty of death (Gen 2:17)
 - “Whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. For he how said, ‘Do not commit adultery’, and also, ‘Do not kill’. If you do not commit adultery but do kill, you have become a transgressor of the law” (James 2:10-11)
 - Answer – **NO**

Are There Degrees of Sin? (2)

- Results in Life and in Relationship with God
 - When Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate, He said, “he who delivered me to you has the greater sin” (John 19:11)
 - God told Ezekiel “But you will see still greater abominations” (Ezek 19:11)
 - In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, “Whoever the relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt 5:19)
 - Conclusions
 - Sins that are done willfully, repeatedly, and knowingly with a calloused heart, are more displeasing to God that those that are done out of ignorance and are not repeated, or are done with a mixture of good and impure motives and are followed by remorse and repentance. (pg 502)
 - Sins committed with...arrogance and disdain for God’s commandments were viewed very seriously
 - **YES**

What Happens When a Christian Sins? (1)

- Our legal standing before God is unchanged
 - “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Rom 8:1)
 - Martin Luther encouraged people to “sin boldly”
 - Not that sinning is good for our relationship with God
 - It does not effect our legal standing with God as His child, His High priest, His ambassador to mankind

What Happens When a Christian Sins? (2)

- Our fellowship with God is disrupted and our Christian life is damaged
 - Scriptures
 - It is possible for Christians to “grieve the Holy Spirit of God” (Eph 4:30)
 - “the Lord disciplines him whom he loves” (Heb 12:6)
 - “the Father of spirits...disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness” (Heb 12:9-10)
 - “Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent” (Rev 3:19)
 - Our Christian life and fruitfulness in ministry are also damaged
 - “As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me” (John 15:4)
 - We may suffer a loss of heavenly reward
 - Wood, hay, and stubble will be burned up on the final day of judgment (1 Cor 3:12)
 - “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil, according to what he has done in the body” (2 Cor 5:10)

What is the “Unpardonable Sin”?

- What is the unpardonable sin? (Mat 12:31-32, Mar 3:29-30, Heb 6:4-6)
- Different Views:
 - Could only be committed while Christ was earth
 - Unbelief continues until the time of death
 - Serious apostasy by genuine believers
 - Usually malicious, willful rejection and slander against the Holy Spirit’s work attesting to Christ, and attributing that work to Satan. (Mat 12:24)
- If you are afraid that you have committed this sin, you haven’t

The Punishment of Sin

- The primary reason for punishment is that God's righteousness demands it
- It also serves as deterrent against further sinning and as a warning to those who deserve it

The Covenants Between God and Man

- The Covenants Between God and Man: What principles determine the way God relates to us?
 - *A covenant is an unchangeable, divinely imposed legal agreement between God and man that stipulates the conditions of their relationship*
- Divinely imposed=man agrees but God dictates the terms
- Unchangeable=can be superseded, replaced—not changed

The Covenant of Works (1)

- Essential parts of covenant present...
 - Clear definition of parties involved
 - Legally binding set of provisions that stipulate the conditions of their relationship (Gen 1:28, Gen 2:16-17)
 - Promises of blessings for obedience (implied in commandments to A&E; note also Rom 7:10, Lev 18:5)
 - The condition for obtaining those blessings: obedience to God's commands
- Symbol of Covenant: not named, but probably the Tree of Life
- Importance of speaking of the relationship between God and man in the garden as a *covenant* relationship:
 - A relationship did not occur automatically between Creator and creature
 - It was an expression of Gods' fatherly love for the man and woman.
 - Helps us see the clear parallels between this and subsequent covenants

The Covenant of Works (2)

- Covenant of works still in force? Yes, but not in exactly the same way
 - Paul implies: perfect obedience life (Rom 7:10, Rom 10:5)
 - Punishment for covenant is still in effect (Rom 6:23)
 - Christ completely obeyed the covenant of works for us (Rom 5:18-19)
 - In certain senses, the covenant of works does not remain in force
 - Not faced with specific command not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil
 - All have sinful nature and not able to fulfill provisions of the covenant of works on our own and receive its benefits
 - For Christians, Christ has fulfilled the provisions of this covenant successfully once for all
 - For Christians to think of themselves as obligated to try earn God's favor by obedience no hope of salvation (Gal 3:10-11)

The Covenant of Redemption

- A covenant among the members of the Trinity to become a man, be our representative, obey the demands of the covenant of works on our behalf, and pay the penalty for sin, which we deserved.
 - Father: Give the Son a people whom he would redeem, send the Son, accept him as a representative of the redeemed, etc. (Joh 17:2-6, Joh 3:16, Heb 10:5)
 - Son: live as a man under the Mosaic Law, be perfectly obedient (even to death), etc. (Gal 4:4, Heb 10:7, Phi 2:8)
 - Holy Spirit: Fill and empower Christ to carry out his ministry on earth and apply the benefits of Christ's redemptive work (Mat 3:16, Luk 4:1, Joh 14:16-17)
- "Covenant" reminds us that it was something voluntarily undertaken by God

The Covenant of Grace (1)

- Essential Elements
 - Parties: God and the people whom he will redeem, Christ as mediator (Heb 9:15)
 - Condition
 - Beginning: faith in the work of Christ the redeemer (Rom 5:1)
 - Continuing: obedience to Christ's commands (Jam 2:17)
 - Promise: eternal life with God (Rev 21:3)
 - Signs
 - OT: circumcision, ceremonies
 - NT: baptism, Lord's Supper

The Covenant of Grace (2)

- Various forms of the covenant (or these can be called different covenants) (essential elements have remained the same, though the specific provisions of the covenant vary)
 - Covenant with Abraham (appx. 2000 BC) note: parties, condition, promise, sign Gen. 12:1-3; Gen. 15:5-6; 17:1-13 promises: land, great people, blessing. above all: God would be their God, they would be his people
 - The Mosaic Covenant (appx. 1440 BC)
 - Ex. 24:3-8; 34:28; Deut 4:13; Num 10:33
 - Many detailed laws, sacrifices, festivals
 - But the law could not empower obedience

The Covenant of Grace (3)

- Covenant with David (approx. 1000 BC)
 - A continuation of the covenant with Abraham Jer. 33:19-22
- God promised that someday there would be a new covenant Jer. 31:31-33
- The covenants with Abraham and David are never called “old” in the New Testament, only the covenant under Moses (2 Cor 3:14)
- The essential elements of the “covenant of grace” are all there beginning with Abraham Gal. 3:8, 29
- At Christ’s death, a new covenant was established, and we are members of that new covenant (Matt. 26:28; Luke 22:20; Heb. 8:6-13)
- The sacrificial system of the Mosaic covenant foreshadowed the bearing of sin by Christ (Heb 9:14)
- The new covenant in Christ is much more excellent than the old (Heb 8:6)

New Covenant

- Jesus the Messiah has come
- He has lived, died, and risen among us, atoning once for all for our sins (Heb 9:24-28)
- He has revealed God most fully to us (Joh 1:14)
- The new covenant has abolished all the detailed laws about sacrifices, circumcision, dietary laws, festivals, that were part of the Mosaic Covenant (Heb. 10:3-4; Gal. 4:10-11; Gal. 5:1-2; Col. 2:16-17)
- He has poured out the Holy Spirit on all his people in new covenant power (Act 1:8)
- He has written his laws on our hearts (Heb 8:10)
- This new covenant is the “eternal covenant” in Christ we shall forever have fellowship with God, and he shall be our God, and we shall be his people (Heb 8:10; 13:20)

Reading For Two Weeks from Now

- Chapter 26
 - The Person of Christ
 - Homework – questions 1-2 (all)