

DISCIPLESHIP

Sin – Part 2

There is often a sense once we come to know the Lord that sin somehow is left far behind us. We say to ourselves, “I have been washed clean by the blood of Christ. I’m not perfect. I’m forgiven.” Somehow we think that all we need worry about are small sins that really don’t amount to much. Are we wrong?

Sin and the Christian:

1 John 1:8 — If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

These words are directed squarely at those who claim they are _____. If we say that we have _____ sin then we _____ ourselves and the truth is not in us. What truth is that? This deception takes many strange forms. Ravi Zacharias, a renowned Bible Teacher with a world wide ministry died. After his death many extramarital affairs were attributed and documented to have taken place. It is reported that he claimed that he was entitled to all the sexual favors he received because of his great sacrifices for the cause of Christ.

Whole congregations sometimes fall into this pit of deception, believing that because everyone who attends is a Christian there is no serious sin in the congregation and often they ignore warning signs. They then find out such things as the pastor having extramarital relations, youth ministers molesting children, funds being embezzled. We must never assume that we are too good as a congregation that Satan can’t find someone to tempt and a foothold in the fellowship to cause chaos and discord.

Romans 3:21-25 — But now apart from the law, a righteousness of God has been revealed, being testified by the law and the prophets; (22) even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ to all and on all those who believe. (23) For there is no distinction, for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; (24) being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; (25) whom God set forth to be an atoning sacrifice, through

faith in his blood, for a demonstration of his righteousness through the passing over of prior sins, in God's forbearance;

Verse 21 states that apart from the law, a _____ of God has been revealed both by the law and the prophets. What is that righteousness? That same righteousness that was testified of by the law and the prophets is demonstrated in _____ to all who _____. Verse 23 points out that there is no distinction because all have _____ and fallen short of the glory of God. Verse 24 says we are _____ freely by his grace through the redemption found in Jesus. Verse 25 states that God set forth Jesus as an _____ sacrifice through faith that his blood sacrifice was sufficient to cause our _____ to be forgiven (PR: Matthew 20:28, Ephesians 1:7, 1 Peter 1:18,19)

What is that righteousness that was revealed in the law and the prophets? It is that by _____ in God we may be _____. This has been God's plan for the _____ of humanity from the beginning and a demonstration of his mercy. His mercy is an attribute of his righteousness.

GRACE: The undeserved favor of God who by the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ makes it possible for all to be reconciled to the Heavenly Father. Grace initiates the state of undeserved favor, maintains it through the course of a person's life to the final outcome of our salvation and living for eternity in the presence of the Lord (PR: Psalm 106:4).

Note that verse 25 says our prior sins are forgiven through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. What happens then to our current sins and our future iniquities?

1 John 1:9 — If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

It is important to realize that confession as written about here is not just saying I have done wrong and I am asking for forgiveness and then going and doing the same thing. It is part of the process of repentance which is meant to take place in the heart of a believer where we ask God to break both the pattern of sin in our lives and the desire for sin. Understand also that our confession of sin is done through the office of _____ as our _____.

Matthew 4:17 — *From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

These are the first recorded words of Christ' ministry. It is a clear and definitive call to _____. Jesus also gives the reason for repenting it is because the kingdom of heaven is _____. What does it mean when Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven is at hand or near (both in time and space).

2 Corinthians 6:1-2 — *We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain. (2) (For he says, I have heard you in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I helped you: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)*

We cannot assume we can choose the time of our salvation. Verse 2 clearly states that there is a _____ that is set (accepted) for our salvation or the acceptable time for _____. No person is assured of tomorrow. The news is full of stories of people who have died suddenly and unexpectedly, some violently, some from illness, and some from other causes. The day to accept Christ is _____. If you are a Christian and caught in sin or a season of sin, then the time to repent with confession and humility is _____.

Question: Much of this is Christianity 101, why then is God having us study such basic things again?

Sin and the Ministry of Believers:

James 5:16 — *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.*

1 John 1:9 tells us to confess our faults to the Lord. Why then does James 5:16 tell us to confess our _____ one to another and pray for each other. This does not mean we go around telling everyone everything we have done wrong. By spiritual discernment we should be able to see someone who has wisdom and maturity in the spirit who as a brother or sister in Christ would pray for us in humility and not become proud or condemn us because of our sins. The Greek word translated as healed is more properly translated as “made whole”. While most Christians think of healing only in the terms of physical healing, _____ healing is more important and of more lasting consequence.

1 Peter 2:9 — *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:*

1 Peter 2:9 says that we are a royal priesthood and thus James 5:16 is part of the _____ that believers are expected to fulfill. Confession should be listened to in the Spirit of Christ. Prayer and intercession should be made in the Spirit of the Lord and in doing so we show forth the praises of God who has called us out of _____ into the light of _____.

James 5:20 — *Let him know, that he who converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

As Christians when we intercede for someone who is either in the church or outside of it (not a member, perhaps not attending) and they are converted from their _____ then we have been used by God to save a soul from death and we _____ a multitude of _____. Very clearly we have no right to broadcast a sin or sins that someone has shared with us unless there is physical danger to themselves or to someone else.

2 Timothy 4:2 — *Preach the word; be diligent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.*

Here is more on the ministry of believers. It says to _____ the word, be _____ or always ready to act when the Lord opens opportunities or we come to know a need. The following are things which the scriptures says believers should do, but which are seldom done in the church. It says we should _____ or convince others of the need to repent and seek the Lord. It says we should _____ or actively face with their wrong (can be done in private) those who are in error. Additionally we should _____ with long suffering (patience) and a pure _____.

Question: Clearly the verses we have just covered are part of the ministry and duties of a believer. Why then are there so few churches where these things are done as ordinary Christian practices? Why are people so fearful to share their spiritual problems and trust a brother or sister to pray for them. Why do Christians so seldom reprove, rebuke, or exhort each other?

Common Problems in Believers:

Luke 18:11 — *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank you, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.*

In this parable from Jesus, he describes a _____ man full of _____. This is a person who is so deceived about their own goodness that they would never offer a _____ a helping hand, extend the grace of the gospel to them or consider them worthy or capable of being saved by the grace of God.

If we are truly good (have the spirit of Christ, the Heavenly Father, and the Holy Spirit) within us is there ever a need to boast of it? _____ Pride is one sure way of impeding the work of the Holy Spirit within a person and within a congregation (PR: James 4:6).

Luke 6:36-37 — *Be you therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. (37) Judge not, and you shall not be judged: condemn not, and you shall not be condemned: forgive, and you shall be forgiven:*

Verse 36 tells us to be _____ as our Father in Heaven is merciful. Verse 37 says not to _____ or _____ and to forgive with the understanding that we also hope to be spared judgment and condemnation and to be forgiven of our sins. The spirit of mercy is one of helping (what forms of help) someone work through dealing with their sins and coming to Jesus Christ for redemption and restoration. Having a merciful heart means that we are always ready to share Christ with another individual, to give them a helping hand when needed, and to be in prayer for their spiritual and physical needs.

More sinners looking for hope have left a church behind them, having been driven out by judgmental attitudes and actions. There is a story that Thomas Aquinas, a leading teacher and theologian in the early church one day passed a leper on a trail. He moved to the other side of the trail to avoid making contact with him. He had only gone a few steps when the spirit of conviction hit him with the idea that Christ would not have passed on the other side. He quickly turned around and could see no sign of the leper he had just passed a few seconds ago. He felt then that this was a test from the Lord to see if he had the same heart for the hurting and lost that the Lord Jesus would have displayed.

Matthew 9:10-11 — *And it came to pass, as Jesus sat to eat in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. (11) And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?*

Jesus and his disciples sat and kept company with many tax collectors and _____. The Pharisees saw it and could not understand why a “good” person would keep company with sinners.

Matthew 9:12-13 — *But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. (13) But go and learn what that means, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

Jesus kept company with the socially unacceptable crowd. Those who think they are righteous do not believe they need _____ healing (to be made whole in heart, mind, and spirit). People who are broken, lost, and sinners are more likely to come to an end where all their efforts for a good life come to disappointment and they are more likely to seek Christ in _____.

Seeking the lost does not mean that we go into bars to drink with someone and try to share Christ. However, it might indeed mean we might go and find a friend who struggles with alcohol and encourage him to go home, even offer to take him home, before he spends all his money and leaves his wife and children without the means for survival. Celebrate Recovery Leaders are required to share their personal phone numbers with members of their groups in case there is a need for help in overcoming an addiction, an accident, or other situations that arises in the life of a person struggling with addiction. It is not uncommon to have calls at 2 or 3 AM in the morning from people struggling with addiction, despair, and even thoughts of suicide.

Mark 8:17-19 — *And when Jesus knew it, he said unto them, Why reason you, because you have no bread? perceive you not yet, neither understand? have you your heart yet hardened? (18) Having eyes, see you not? and having ears, hear you not? and do you not remember? (19) When I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took you up? They said unto him, Twelve.*

The disciples were traveling in a boat with Jesus, but had forgotten to take any supplies beyond one loaf of bread. As they pondered the situation Jesus told them to beware the leaven of the Pharisees. The disciples wondered if that comment was made because they did not have enough bread. Jesus rebukes his disciples asking if their _____ are still hardened. He asks them if having seen the miracles, can't they see that the issue of one loaf or no loaves is not the issue. Jesus further asks them since they have ears, why haven't they _____ (listening with the heart and the mind of Christ without using worldly reasoning). Then Jesus asks another question, "do you not _____?" Forgetfulness is one of the great obstacles to living out our lives as disciples of Christ. We forget to be on our guard spiritually. We forget to listen to the whisper of the Holy Spirit. We forget to examine our lives and to quickly confess our faults and put away our sins. We even forget the miracles that God has rendered in our lives. Some Christians are so forgetful that they have forgotten their sins that were forgiven. We forget the pang of conviction that the Holy Spirit brings. We even forget (in our hearts and souls where it counts) the sacrifice of Christ for the redemption of our own souls.

Matthew 22:29 — *Jesus answered and said unto them, You do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.*

These are the words of Jesus Christ and he states that people _____ because they do not know the _____ nor the _____ of God. Biblical illiteracy is a spiritual disease that permeates the entire church. It is because of spiritual ignorance that so many fall to false doctrines and consume the worldliest philosophies as spiritual wisdom. Many claim to be "spiritual" people, but what spirit are they talking about? Is it the untainted spirit of Christ or is the spirit of hell?

There is another issue that is raised in verse 29 and that is error that is due to not knowing the _____ of God. Many Christians give lip service to the concept of God's power, but few personally have witnessed God's power to free a person from the bondage of addiction. Few have seen a person filled with despair and hate given hope and their hate turned to love. Fewer Christians still have never seen the power of God act in righteous judgment upon an individual, a group, a congregation, or a nation. When the day of judgment comes because cold hard hearts continued in open rebellion and evil, God acts swiftly and powerfully and at that point there is no remedy.

Ephesians 4:14 — *That we from now on be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, by which they lie in wait to deceive;*

Ephesians points out a problem in the church, one which is as common as the day these words were first written. Paul tells the Ephesians not to be _____, they had not attained spiritual maturity by seeking and following Jesus Christ and the untainted doctrine of the gospel. Men were devising crafty doctrines of deceit by which these believers were _____. How then can we be sure that the doctrines we follow are those of God?

Psalm 37:30-31 — *The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of justice. (31) The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide.*

Many people interject comments into a conversation wanting to be heard to be noticed, but a righteous person does not do this. They speak words of _____ and talk of _____ at appropriate times. They speak from a sure and certain knowledge because the _____ of God is in their _____ and because that knowledge of the word of God is sure and certain they will never slip or _____ spiritually (PR: Proverbs 10:19).

Question: How is God's law written in the heart of a person?

1 Corinthians 3:3 — *For you are yet carnal: for while there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are you not carnal, and walk as men?*

Here is a major problem in the church today. It ranges from people wanting to look wise and spiritual and spouting doctrines and interpretations of scripture that are twisted to appease their own conceits to arguments over paint color, carpets, and the temperature in the sanctuary. Paul states that all _____ and _____ and the divisions that it causes comes from _____ people who are acting like the unsaved. True Christians exercise love, patience, and kindness, while these people rage in the conceit of their vast egos (PR: Galatians 5:22-23).

Egregious Sins in the Church:

Proverbs 6:16-19 — *These six things does the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: (17) A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, (18) A heart that devises wicked imaginations, feet that are swift in running to evil, (19) A false witness that speaks lies, and he that sows discord among brethren.*

These verses point out things that are abominable in to the Lord. God hates a _____ look, because it shows a person who is righteous by the measure of their own vanity. They will never humble themselves to the Lord, but like Satan will always be looking to exalt themselves. A _____ tongue is not just telling falsehoods, but having a heart and mind that wants to lead people astray or convince them of untruths. How many politicians fit this bill? Hands that shed _____ blood is not just killing an innocent person, but it is also participating in character assassination, fault finding, and vicious gossip in an effort to destroy a person's reputation. A _____ that dreams up wicked things to do is one so corrupt that God hates it. Feet that are swift in running to _____ can be a person who is quick to tell the wrong that others have done and who rejoices in the failures and fall of others. A false _____ that speaks lies can be a person who claims they are a _____ for Christ and yet the fruit of the spirit and the truth of God is not evident in their lives. Anyone who sows _____ among the brethren is abominable in God's eyes.

2 Samuel 1:14 — *And David said unto him, How were you not afraid to stretch forth your hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed?*

Pastors in the church fulfill much of the same function that priests did in the Old Testament. They are to be called of God to fulfill that office and responsibility. They are to be shepherds of God's flock. They are to be spiritual watchmen over the congregation and warn when they see danger or sin threatening. In a very real sense they are _____ by the Lord to accomplish his will and purpose among believers. David asks Amalekite, who confessed to killing Saul, how he was not _____ to destroy the _____ anointed. This is question that view consider when they address the pastor of a church with insults, derogatory comments, vicious rumors and denunciations against their character, motive, and actions. Few

also consider that the spiritual covering over the pastor as God's anointed carries over to the pastor's wife.

1 Timothy 5:1 — Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brothers;

1 Timothy 5:19-20 — Against an elder receive not an accusation, unless before two or three witnesses. (20) Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.

The English word elder is derived from the Greek "presbyteros" which denotes not just a person who is mature in the spirit, but also one fit to lead in the way of Christ. No person is above temptation, and these verses reveal how a congregation should deal with error or sin in an _____. A pastor is meant to be the leading elder in a church.

Conclusion:

Hebrews 2:3 — How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

The church is the vessel that Christ established where we could learn to become true disciples. Our conduct within the church though speaks volumes about whether we are truly disciples of Christ or a herd of people who just occasionally meet and give lip service to the Lord. The same admonitions about behavior in the church carry over to our conduct with others outside the church.

Neglect the church, neglect our role as disciples and we neglect the salvation we claim. If we do this how can we escape?