

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

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I Have Sinned

Someone has said that the three sweetest words in the English language are, "I Love you." The three hardest are "I have sinned."

It's hard to get most people to say "I was wrong," but it is even harder to get them to say "I have sinned."

John declares, however, that we all have sinned and anyone who denies such is a liar.

If on the other hand we confess our sin, "he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

I. We Do Have Sins To Confess.

A. The bible says so. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" Romans 3:23 "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not" Eccl. 7:20

Eph. 2:1 You...who were dead in trespasses and sins."

Jere. 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked."

Adam and Eve were the first people on earth and they sinned.

Everyone who has lived since then has gone down into sin, except Christ.

Romans 3:9-10 "What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin. As it is written There is none righteous, no, not one."

B. Our conscience tells us we have sinned.

Everyone has a conscience that rings out like a bell, telling us that we have sinned.

Millions have suffered the pangs of conscience. The thief, who languishes over his ill gotten gain. The young girl who seeks an abortion, or the young man who leaves a girl to care for the child he fathered.

Over time and in various ways our conscience torments us when we do wrong.

II. Bible Confessions of Sin.

A. Pharaoh, the hardened sinner: God's people were in bondage in Egypt, so God sent Moses to Pharaoh to demand that they be set free.

Pharaoh laughed and said "who is God that I should obey His voice?"

He essentially told Moses to leave or get out.

As a result God sent plague after plague upon Egypt and its people.

Still he would not let the people go.

Finally the greatest tragedy of all struck. The first-born in every Egyptian home died during the night.

Even the son of Pharaoh, the crown prince was not spared.

He sent for Moses and said "I have sinned, I give up, your God has won, the Israelites can go." Moses gathers the people and leave for the promised land.

Pharaoh's guilt was short lived. He changed his mind and with his army went after Moses and the people, you know the rest of the story.

That is the case of a hardened sinner. Under pressure he admitted his sin, but there was no genuine repentance in his heart. Many sinners today are like that. They under pressure or under threat of death

profess that they want to change and serve God, but when things get better they go right back to their old ways. Have you made some vow to God that you have failed to keep?

Perhaps after praying for the recovery of a loved one or tearfully saying good bye to a loved one? If so, don't forget your promise.

Ex. 4:21 "...But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go."

What is meant by God hardening the heart of Pharaoh? Calamities that fail to soften the heart often harden it. God did not intervene in any way to soften the heart of the King. He allowed the King free will to disobey and refuse to let the people go. And it is in this way that it can be said "he hardened his heart." What God failed to prevent, he is charged with causing.

B. Achan, the last minute sinner.

Joshua's army, under God, had been victorious and triumphant against the walled city of Jericho.

Then, when they went up against Ai they were driven back, and dismally defeated. Joshua knew there must be some reason for the defeat, so he fell on his face before God and asked him the age-old question, Why?

God replied "there is sin in the camp." "Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put it among their own stuff." Joshua 7:11 Joshua searched the camp and found the guilty man. Achan had stolen some Babylonian gold and garments, and hidden them in his tent, going against God's commandments. When confronted, he said "Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I have done..." The penalty for the crime was death.

Achan was the type of man who, when he is facing death remembers his sins and cries out to God.

These repent only when they get caught. Forced confessions are no good.

Some deathbed confessions are brought on by fear. It is tragic when people put off their salvation until they are almost staring into the face of God's judgment.

Joshua and the Israelites took him and all his stolen goods to the Valley of Achor and stoned him and his family and burned them with fire.

Note: His sin not only destroyed Achan, but all his family as well. "No man liveth unto himself."

What a tragedy when people take others to hell with them.

What an awful thing to have someone we love point a finger at us and say "I'm here because of you. I followed you and am lost forever."

C. David, the conspiring sinner.

One spring evening while the army was away at battle.

David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house.

And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, "and the woman was very beautiful to behold." A love affair ensued, and Bathsheba was expecting David's child.

He arranged, with the help of Joab, to have her husband killed, and evidently thought this would conceal the entire affair.

Bathsheba became his wife and she bore him a son, "but the thing that David had done displeased the Lord." Hence, God dispatched one of his faithful preachers to David. Note his approach: no flattery, no rebuke.

Nathan came with the following story: Two men in one city, one rich one poor.

The rich had many herds and flocks, the poor has but one little ewe lamb.

He had bought and nourished the lamb, and it had grown up with his children.

It was like a daughter to him. A traveler came to the rich man who refused to take from his flock, but instead took the lamb from his neighbor and prepared it for the traveler.

The incident angered David and he said who is this man, he shall surely die.

"You are the man." Read 2 Sam. 12:7-15. "I have sinned" A clean cut confession

No attempt to explain or justify, no "there are others just as bad etc."

What a sad heart-rending story. Intertwined in this tragedy, however, is the wonderful love and grace of God who forgives sinners when they repent.

D. The prodigal son, the repentant sinner. Luke 15.

After his sinful fling in the far country, we find him in a hog pen many miles from home.

1. He came to himself. This simply means that he came to his senses, he saw himself as he was, he saw things in the right light.

He thought of his home and all the things he had once enjoyed. He realized how wrong he had been in leaving. This man did some thinking. What many people today need to do.

They need to think of God's goodness and they need to reflect on their sin.

They need to think of what happens to a man who leaves God out of his life.

2. He was filled with sorrow. He said "I will go back and tell my father that I have sinned and am no more worthy to be called his son. He could have made excuses for his behavior. He could have tried to justify what he had done, but he said "I have sinned." Didn't say "I've made a bad choice" or "I could have done better" or "I didn't intend to go this far." That is what every sinner and erring brother must feel if they are going to be forgiven by God. 3. He made a good resolution. "I will arise and go" What a great thing to conclude and say.

"I'll do it, I'll live for Christ, I'll become a Christian, I'll return to the Father.

The battle is half won when you make up your mind about any matter.

4. He put his resolutions into action. It wasn't enough to feel, he had to act. You can't put a band-aid on sin. He arose and came to his father. His father saw him a long way off and ran to meet him. "My son that was dead is alive, he was lost and is found."

III. Christ Forgives Our Sins.

I don't know why it is so hard for men to admit that they have sinned.

Perhaps it is pride Or maybe shame or fear of being found out

But whatever the reason, sin cannot be forgiven unless we confess to God and ask for forgiveness.

1 John 1:8-10 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us."

Some outright deny any sin or blame in a matter.

Others blame someone else and try and shift the guilt to someone else.

Others only say "if" I have done wrong. Or I made a "mistake" or "it was a bad choice"

All of which may be true, but in reality sin is sin regardless by what name we choose to call it. Would it really be too hard to go to a brother you have offended or hurt and say "I have sinned? Would it be all that difficult to straighten out those things that should have been resolved long ago? Surely not. All sin must be repented of and confessed in order for man to be forgiven. Jesus prayed "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." The forgiveness for which Jesus prayed did not become a reality until the day of Pentecost when those guilty of crucifying Christ repented and were baptized for the remission of their sins. The Prodigal in the parable (a child of God) said "I have sinned" he was forgiven, but not until he returned home with that confession.

Today when we sin, we must repent and pray God for forgiveness.

Simon in Acts 8 made a terrible mistake when he sought to buy the power of God with money. He was told to repent and pray God..."It is a grave mistake for those who are alienated from God to wait and delay their obedience to the gospel.

Sinners must come in faith, repentance, confession, and baptism. Children of God who sin need to

come to God in repentance and confession.

Many wait too late. Story: a boy in Scotland was wild and wayward. Living in sin, and breaking his mother's heart. One night he became intoxicated and lost consciousness. When he awakened he was on a freighter bound for Australia.

Worked for awhile in the gold mines and then staked out a claim of his own.

Months later he struck it rich. He first thought of his mother and how he had treated her and resolved to return and take care of her by providing for her welfare.

He sailed for home and as soon as he landed he made his way to her house. Calling her name he knocked on the door. But there was no response. A neighbor saw him and came over and led him to a little cemetery. He saw there a new grave and a little marker with his mother's name on it. He fell across the grave and sobbed over and over, "Mother, I loved you, I did, I did." The neighbor softly said "Jack, you told her too late."

Don't wait too late to tell God you have sinned. And that you want his forgiveness.