

DECLARING THE GOSPEL

“...I declare unto you the gospel...” (I Corinthians 15:1)

January/February, 2021
THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER OF
GOD UNTO SALVATION
(Romans 1:16)

A Publication of the
Mt. Zion church of Christ
5905 HWY 128
Savannah TN 38372
731-925-3423

Website: mtzionhofchrist.org
Email: mtzion5905@bellsouth.net

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
Morning Worship.....10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship.....5:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

PREACHER
Gilbert Gough

WATCH DECLARING THE GOSPEL

Freedom River Ministries
Charter Cable 10
Monday 7:30 p.m., Tuesday 6:00 p.m.,
Thursday 6:30 p.m.

HEAR

ONE MINUTE BIBLE STUDY

each weekday on
WKWX 93.5 FM
8:05 a.m.-11:40 a.m.-4:18 p.m.-6:30 p.m.
WORM 101.7 FM & 105.5 FM
7:50 a.m.-11:25 a.m.-4:50 p.m.-8:50 p.m.

WATCH

ONE MINUTE BIBLE STUDY

on the Mt Zion church of Christ
FaceBook page
Posted Each Weekday @ 6:00 a.m.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

Hear the Word of God and Believe in Jesus
Romans 10:17; John 8:24
Repent of Sin & Confess Christ
Acts 17:30, 31; Romans 10:9, 10
Be Baptized for the Remission of your sins
Acts 2:38; 22:16

The Destructive Nature of Sin

For a person to be saved, he first must understand the destructive nature of sin. How does the Bible define sin? What is the nature of sin? How does God describe it, and to what does He compare it? Why is sin so deadly to humans? These are some of the questions we will address from the Word of God as we consider the destructive nature of sin. As we think about sin, the Bible tells us what sin is. It tells us when we do sin and fall short of God's will. So, from Scripture, what is sin?

What Is Sin?

We know first that sin is transgression of God's law. I John 3:4 teaches us this very principle: "...for sin is the transgression of the law." When we go beyond what God tells us to do, or when we do not live up to His expectations, then we have transgressed His law. It is like a parent who tells a child to do something like cleaning his room, doing his homework, or returning to the house at a certain time of night. When that child fails to do those things, he has transgressed the law set down by his parents. The same is true with us. When God tells us to do something by setting forth laws in the Bible, and we fail to keep those laws, then we have transgressed the law of God.

A second way sin could be described is as "unrighteousness." I John 5:17 says "All unrighteousness is sin..." The idea of righteousness is "right doing"—the keeping of God's law and living correctly. When we live in an unrighteous way, then we are doing things that are not in accordance with God's will. When God tells us to talk or act in a certain way, and we do the opposite, then we are viewed as unrighteous in God's sight. Thus, whether it is our actions, our thoughts, things that we say, or things that we do, whenever we do the opposite of what is right and good, then we have sinned against God. God is a righteous Judge, and He is going to judge us according to the way we live our lives in the here and now.

Third, we should recognize that sin is knowing what God wants us to do, but not doing it. James 4:17 defined it this way—"Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." This is what we might refer to as a "sin of omission." We knew what the right thing was to do, but we failed to act upon that knowledge. For example, maybe we know it is the right thing to do to assemble with the saints, but we fail to attend to worship God. Maybe we know it is right to study the Bible, but we fail to do so. When we fail to keep God's law, then we have omitted to do things that are necessary for our salvation.

As we think about the nature of sin, we need to inquire as to how sin is portrayed in the Bible. To what does God compare sin so that we can know exactly what it is?

What Is the Nature of Sin?

First, sin is a defilement. II Corinthians 7:1 teaches us that sin is a defilement of the body and of the spirit. To comprehend the idea of "defilement," think of a beautiful painting. Imagine taking a glass of red Kool-Aid and splashing it all over that painting. The painting has been defiled. It is no longer good for anything. It is not to be viewed in a beautiful way because it has been defiled. The Jew would naturally understand the concept of defilement. If you were to offer a Jew a plate of pork during the time of Jesus, that would be one of the worst types of defilement they could imagine. The same is true in a sense for us today, except that sin is a defilement of our body and our spirit. When we do things that are wrong or contrary to God's will, then we have defiled our spirit. When we do things against our bodies (like ingesting beverage alcohol or doing drugs), we defile our bodies. When we fail to keep God's law, and when we do not live up to His standards, then we defile our spirit because it is no longer holy. It is defiled because it no longer has the pure character that it should have. I Peter 1:15 teaches, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." When we bring sin into our lives, we are no longer holy or pure. We have defiled ourselves.

The Bible also defines sin as a spot or a stain upon a beautiful garment. James 1:27 teaches us that we must keep ourselves unspotted from the world. James wrote: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." This presents the idea of sin being a spot or stain upon our garment. Isaiah 64:6 says that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Here is a vivid illustration as to how sin is like a stain or a spot. When the son was young, the father brought him a beautiful white suit to wear to worship. It had rained the night before, and as he walked down the steps of our porch, he slipped and fell into a mud puddle. That beautiful suit that had been bought for him was stained with mud and dirt. That is a vivid illustration of how our spirit looks when we have sin in our lives. We ought to be pure, holy, and righteous before God. But when sin comes in, it stains our garments. Maybe you have gotten paint on your hands in the past, and you understand how hard it is to get it off. It stays on you, even though you wash and wash. But it still refuses to come off. That is what sin is like. When we are baptized into the body of Christ, we have our sins washed away (Acts 22:16). We should be pure, holy, and righteous in God's sight.

We also need to know that sin is described in the Bible as a heavy burden that man cannot bear. Think about Psalm 38:4, where we find an accurate description of how sin is a heavy burden. The psalmist said, "For mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me." This idea of his sins or iniquities going over his head seems to present the idea that he is drowning in them and that they are crushing down on him so that the weight is unbearable. He thus said, "They are too heavy for me to bear." Sin is like drowning. It is like bearing a burden that you just cannot lift by yourself. Maybe you have lifted weights or tried to carry something, but you reached a "breaking point" where you simply could not lift or carry any more. Sin is something a man cannot bear by himself.

As we think about the nature of sin as described in the Bible, we also learn that God feels very strongly about sin. How does He feel about sin? We need to understand that God does not take any pleasure in sin. By that, we mean that He does not delight in it, He does not joke about it, and He does not laugh about sin. God takes sin very seriously because sin is an offense to Him. Think about Psalm 5:4, where we find an apt description of how God feels about sin. The psalmist wrote, "For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee." God does not take pleasure in sin. He does not delight in it, and it is not joyful to Him. It is not something that He considers in a lighthearted way. That is not God's attitude toward sin. He is very serious about sin. We know our Lord hated lawlessness. Hebrews 1:9 tells us this very principle. Jesus hated lawlessness. Jesus hated the absence of law or the inability to follow and keep God's commands. The Bible does not tell us about too many things that God and Jesus actually hate. But we need to know that both of them hate sin and iniquity. Why is that? Why do they hate sin?

Jesus and God hate sin because of what it does to their creation. We are the creation of God. When God made the

heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1), He also made man in His own image (Genesis 1:27). God loves us so much that He wants us to go to Heaven. He loves us so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die on our behalf. Sin separates us from God (Isaiah 59:2). So we need to know that God feels very strongly about sin. We need to know that there is no acquittal for the wicked. Nahum 1:3 says God will not acquit the wicked. If we live in sin and practice sin, then when we die and stand before the judgment bar of God, God is not going to say, "Well, I know that you didn't really mean to do it, and even though you are guilty, I'm still going to acquit you." There will be no acquittal from God for those who live in sin in this life. The only way we can have our sins nullified is by living true to Christ every day, by obeying the Gospel, and by being faithful to our Lord.

What Is the Problem with Sin?

Sin is a universal problem. Sin is not something that just a few people have to confront. Rather, sin is a universal problem that all men everywhere must confront. All people commit sin and unrighteousness. Sin is something that has afflicted every person who has ever lived. Think back to the wise words of Solomon in Ecclesiastes 7:20 when he said, "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." All people do sin. Be reminded of the words of Paul in Romans 3:10. "There is none righteous, no not one." He further said in Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

As we think about the problem of sin, we need to know that sin does not originate with God. Sin originates from within mankind. James 1:14, 15 says, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lusts, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Sin does not begin with God. Rather, it starts with our own lusts, desires, and actions. The sin problem lies solely with man. When we sin, we cannot look up to Heaven and blame God. We have only ourselves to blame with this problem. Romans 5:12 teaches, "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Death has come to all men because all have sinned. It is not because Adam sinned. It is because all have chosen the path of sin. All men need the soul-saving message of Jesus so they can have salvation.

What Is the Penalty for Sin?

Think now about the penalty that accompanies sin. Sin is such a horrible problem because of the penalty that it carries. Sin brings death to man. This is one of the problems man must face as a result of sin. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:1, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Why were these people "dead"? Because they had lived lives of sin. They had lived in rebellion to God, and as a result they needed the message of salvation. Romans 6:23 describes sin this way: "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Sin does bring death. The paycheck of sin is death. But there is hope because of the free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. If we live in sin, we need to know that we will suffer a spiritual death. On the other side of this life, we are going to be lost for all eternity.

The penalty of sin also brings us separation from God. Sin separates humans from their God. Think about Isaiah 59:1, 2. Isaiah wrote: “Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” As we think about the penalty of sin, the worse thing that we can imagine is that sin separates us from God. God is on one side, and we are on the other. Sin has severed that relationship.

When we think about the horrible consequences of sin, one of the worst of those is that sin causes man not to be in a right relationship with God. Imagine what a tragedy that is. God is depicted as a God of love, a God of compassion, and a God of comfort Who wants to bless us and bring us home to Heaven. Yet sin causes us to be lost and to be without hope. It causes us to be severed from our God.

The penalty of sin is the sacrifice of Jesus. Sin sent Jesus to the cross. Isaiah 53:5 says, “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement for our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.” Why did Jesus have to suffer and take upon Himself the penalty for our sins? It was because He was the atoning sacrifice. He alone lived a perfect life. Sin is such a horrible thing because it sent Jesus, our Lord and Savior, to the cross. Peter must have had Isaiah 53:4, 5 in mind when he wrote in I Peter 2:24, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.” Sin brings with it a great penalty. But Jesus went to the cross and bore that penalty for each one of us. II Corinthians 5:21 says, “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” When Jesus cried out in Matthew 27:46, “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?,” the answer is that it was because of our sins. Jesus was separated from God as a result of our sins. We therefore must realize that sin does carry with it a very heavy penalty.

One of the worst penalties of sin is that a person can be lost in Hell forever if he remains in sin. It is a sad thing to think about a person being lost in Hell. But that is exactly what the Bible says will happen to those who do not obey the Gospel. Jesus described Hell in Mark 9:44 when He said that it is a place “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” Think about Luke 16:19-31. The rich man wanted just a single drop of water to cool his tongue because he acknowledged that he was in torment. The book of Revelation describes the horror of Hell as a “lake of fire.” In the Gospel accounts, Hell is depicted as a place of weeping and gnashing of teeth—a horrible place where no one would ever want to go. But we need to know that if we live a life of sin, we will live in Hell for eternity. God does not want that, and we should not want that.

What Is the Cure for Sin?

As we think about the nature of sin and its penalty, we also need to realize that there is a cure for sin. Here is the good news of the Gospel. Yes, if a person lives in sin, he or she will spend eternity with the Devil. But no one has to live in sin because there is a cure for the sin problem. Jesus Himself is that

cure! In Matthew 26:28, Jesus said, “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Jesus offered His blood as an atoning sacrifice—a sacrifice “shed for many” so that sins could be forgiven. Hebrews 10:12 describes Jesus as the “once-for-all” sacrifice. “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down at the right hand of God.” Hebrews 2:9 says Jesus tasted “death for every man.” He died so we would not have to. He became a sacrifice so we would not have to bear the guilt of our own sins. I John 2:1, 2 teaches He is “the propitiation for our sins; And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” Romans 5:8 reads: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Jesus loved us so much that while we were steeped in sin and dying in its muck and mire, He provided us a way to avoid having to bear the guilt of our sin. Jesus is the only way to salvation. In John 14:6, Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, except by me.” Jesus is the only way, the only path, to God. We cannot get to God without going through Christ. It is essential that if we are going to be saved, we must hear the words of Jesus and obey the plan of salvation. In Matthew 7:21, Jesus said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” The person who will be saved is the person who does Christ’s will. What is the cure for sin today? How do we overcome a life of sin?

A person must be willing to obey the Gospel (Hebrews 5:9). He must understand the nature of sin, and must realize that if he remains in sin, he will be lost. And, yes, that person must obey the plan of salvation. In Acts 16:30, the question is asked by the Philippian jailer, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” Jesus made the sacrifice for sin, and if we are willing to obey His will, we can be saved. We must place our trust in Him. The Bible sets forth the plan of salvation for us. We learn from the New Testament that there are five steps in the plan of salvation.

First, one must hear the Word of God. Romans 10:17 says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” When we think about hearing the Word of God, we need to know that this means to be attentive to God’s voice so we can see what God has to say on the matter of salvation, so we can realize He is the only One Who can save us, and so we can put our trust in His Word to save us. Paul said in Romans 1:16 that it is the Gospel that has the power to save mankind. We are told to “receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (James 1:21). To be saved, we must come to the Bible and respect it as the only authority on salvation. We must trust what it has to say.

Second, once having heard the words of God, then we must believe Jesus is the Son of God—the Savior of the world. As to belief, think of the example in Acts 8. Philip and the Ethiopian are going down the road, and he asks, “See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?” (vs. 36). Philip responded, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest” (vs. 37). Thus, one must believe in Jesus as God’s Son.

Third, we not only have to believe in Jesus, but we also have to turn from a life of sin to a life of righteousness. We turn

from sin to God. This is known in the Bible as repentance. In Acts 3:19, Peter preached that we must “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...” In Luke 13:1-5, people were coming to Jesus to ask Him about some who had something bad happen to them. So they asked Jesus if they were worse sinners than all others. Jesus said in Luke 13:3, “I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

Thus, if a person hears God’s Word, believes in Jesus as Savior, and repents of past sin in his life, then fourth, he must be willing to confess Jesus as the Son of God. When we think about confession, heed the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:32, 33. Jesus said, “Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.” Paul said in Romans 10:10, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Fifth, a person must be willing to be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. As we think about baptism, we need to examine what Peter preached in Acts 2 in response to the question, “What shall we do?” (vs. 37). Peter responded by saying, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...” (vs. 38). We must be baptized for the forgiveness of our sins if we want to be rid of the sin problem in our lives.

We are praying for you, so that if you have sin in your life you will make it right. We hope you will realize the destructive nature of sin, and place your trust in Jesus as the only way to be saved from a life of sin.

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “THE DESTRUCTIVE NATURE OF SIN”

Questions to Answer

1. According to I John 3:4, what is sin?
2. James 1:25 teaches us today that we are to live by a certain law. What is that law?
3. What, according to John 12:48, will judge us in eternity?
4. How does I John 5:16, 17 define sin?
5. In James 4:17, James also offers a definition of sin. What is that definition?
6. Explain the statement in Isaiah 64:6 that “all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags.”
7. According to Psalm 38:4, what does our sin become to us?
8. What, according to Psalm 5:4, is God’s attitude toward sin?
9. According to Hebrews 1:9, God loves _____ and hates _____.
10. James 1:14, 15 explains that when people sin, that sin brings forth _____.
12. According to Romans 5:12, why does death come upon all men?
13. In Ephesians 2:1, Paul described some people as “dead.” Why were they dead?
14. What, according to Isaiah 59:1, 2, does sin do to our relationship with God?
15. II Corinthians 5:21 says, “For he hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Who is the “Him” of this passage?
16. According to Matthew 26:28, what did Jesus do that relieves humankind of its sin problem?

THE DESTRUCTIVE NATURE OF SIN

U T R U E U N S P O T T E D W
 O N T R A N S G R E S S I O N
 P U R E S P I R I T U A L Q W
 I C S I W E R I G H T G B U R
 L T O A G I P E G Q I O P I O
 D A S N C H C A N I E O J C N
 E R W G S Q T K R T F D U K G
 F E L L P E U E E A I T S E B
 I B S O E L Q I O D T C T N U
 L E I R V S E U T U N I E E R
 E L N Y Y E S A E T S E O D D
 M L S T A I N N S N A N S N E
 E I G U I L T Y E U C L E S N
 N O U H O L Y A L S R E D S H
 T N S H E A L E D G S E S V S

LIGHT		vs	DARKNESS	
acquittal	pleasure		burden	separation
gift	pure		consequences	sin
glory	quickened		defilement	stain
good	right		enticed	transgression
healed	righteous		guilty	unrighteousness
holy	spiritual		lawlessness	wickedness
just	true		rebellion	wrong
love	unspotted			

**FREE BIBLE
CORRESPONDENCE COURSE**
 For a free twenty-five lesson Bible study, call 925-3423 or write the Mt. Zion church of Christ. Enroll today!

POSTAL CUSTOMER

MT. ZION CHURCH OF CHRIST
 5905 HWY 128
 SAVANNAH TN 38372

Non-Profit Org.
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Permit No. 185
 Savannah TN 38372