

Series Review:

As we continue to discover what it means to live in a post-modern and post-christian culture, I think it's essential for the church to be reminded of what we believe and why it's important to believe it. Many attempt to confuse the church by over-simplifying faith into the idea of **love** {just love God, love others, and know because God loves everyone, he'd never send anyone to hell}

Others attempt to confuse the church by ignoring the reality that our faith grows in the soil of God's Word and not just in the emotion of a newest fad or worship song or even the latest retreat we attend. So we want to share some essential truths rooted in God's Word that are important to believe in and essential to apply in our lives.

We began by looking at what the **Trinity** is all about and how it shapes our understanding of God – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit created all we know out of an abundance of relationship and connection! Last week talked about another foundational element – **Scripture**. The Word of God is not about ME (and what I can get from it) ... it's about God alone. And it's through scripture that we understand the character and will of God most clearly. Today, we continue this path of foundations by considering what gets in the way with our walk with God ... **sin**.

Social Media Connections:

YouVersion Event, [#FCCiBelieve](#), Facebook (sign-in, mention in your status, etc). Grab your **insert** today, take some **notes**, follow along in our **YouVersion** Event ...

Genesis chapter 3: **The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the Lord God had made. One day he asked the woman, "Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden?" 2 "Of course we may eat fruit from the trees in the garden," the woman replied. 3 "It's only the fruit from the tree in the middle of the garden that we are not allowed to eat. God said, 'You must not eat it or even touch it; if you do, you will die.'"**

4 "You won't die!" the serpent replied to the woman. 5 "God knows that your eyes will be opened as soon as you eat it, and you will be like God, knowing both good and evil." 6 The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. 7 At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves.

The birth of sin in this world. Humanity could not get past the 1st generation without breaking the one and only law of God (at that time). God stood on the side of truth – *death will enter this world through sin*; Satan stood condemned and vowed to not face judgement alone – so he twisted the truth by *highlighting the momentary satisfactions* over the eternal consequences ... and mankind took the bait. Happy Birthday sin ... and we've been celebrating that arrival every day since.

Humanity has been sewing our fig clothing for a long time and ducking to avoid the realities of sin whenever we sense God is near. We've done a great job of learning how to become numb to our guilt and shame and we go out of our way to convince ourselves of all that we deserve to *have* and all that we deserve to *know* in this life. Sin is the universal disease of all mankind. **"She saw the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her."** (G3:6) {let that sit for a few seconds}

Some in the various corners of Christianity believe that everything in this world is tainted by sin. They believe that sin rules this world and therefore it's unavoidable – we must do our best to manage it and try hard to just be "good." Problem is that scripture says "no one is good – not even one." The good news for them is that God's grace is large enough to cover our sin – even the sin we allow in our heart {this seems strange to me honestly}. In our corner of the Christian family tree, we view sin as a willful act of disobedience toward God. A decision. An informed act or cognitive attitude toward God or even someone else. {we'll come back to the implications of this position a little later}

Scripture has a great deal to say about sin. Primarily, the Bible is the story of God and his righteousness and strength yet there is quite a bit devoted to help us identify what goes against God's ways. Obviously, the Bible was written a long time ago and primarily in 2 different languages (Hebrew & Greek) and within those languages, there are many deeper meanings to the English words we have in our translations today. For example, the words we read as evil, wicked, transgression or sin come from several different words in the Hebrew and Greek. Let's look at just a couple this morning:

RA – used 600 times – often evil or bad – carries the understanding that it is contrary to God's nature, opposite of God ... *8 Then the Lord God planted a garden in Eden in the east, and there he placed the man he had made. 9 The Lord God made all sorts of trees grow up from the ground—trees that were beautiful and that produced delicious fruit. In the middle of the garden he placed the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.* (Gen 2:9 NLT)

RASHA (raw•shaw) – used 250 times – often wicked – adjective describing something as morally wrong, declared guilty and worthy of punishment – Genesis 18:25 ... Abraham arguing to save Sodom ... **Surely you wouldn't do such a thing, destroying the righteous along with the wicked.** It's used commonly to contrast right/just from wrong/unjust.

AVON (aw•vone) – used 200 times – often iniquity – carries the implication of being perverse, crooked, or twisted – Leviticus 26:40 **"But at last my people will confess their sins and the sins of their ancestors for betraying me and being hostile toward me.**

* **PONEROS** (pon-ay-ros') – used 76 times – often evil or hurtful – often meant something was diseased, malicious, mischief (devil – singular; sinners – plural) – Matt 5:11, **"God blesses you when people mock you and persecute you and lie about you and say all sorts of evil things against you because you are my followers."**

* **HAMARTIA** (ham•ar•tee'•ah) - used 174 times – most commonly sin, offence – properly means a loss or forfeiture due to not hitting the mark – and with that not share in the prize – John 1:29 When John the baptist sees Jesus and proclaims: **"Look! The Lamb of God who takes away**

the sin of the world! It is this word that is used to create Hamartiology – the branch of theology that deals with the study of sin.

We can see from these words how scripture identifies and understands sin. My concern today is not only how we see sin identified in the Bible – every Sunday I hope that we present some truth that helps us all see where we are off the “mark” ... but my concerns for today center around how WE identify and understand sin in the context of our own day to day life. It seems unprecedented to me – but I know my vantage point is rather small – it seems that we live in unprecedented times ... when sin is widely embraced or at best ignored. **Integrity** is ridiculed, **lust** is the norm, **worrying** is medicated, **pleasure** is expected and **sin** is NO BIG DEAL. Scripture is viewed as a lofty ideal – application of it seems like a great idea that I hope to get around to at some point in my life.

We see from the birth of sin in Genesis chapter 3 that the essence of the problem of sin stems from our desire to be like God – which many would argue is **idolatry** in the simplest form. Sin entered the world in Genesis 3 but I think sin wasn't clearly seen or understood until Moses climbed the Mountain of God and received the 10 Commandments. Through Moses, God began to share the Law so that sin could be recognized and avoided. In fact, when I was talking about this with Pastor Steve this week, he pulled up details on the Administration of the Sacraments from the Anglican Church in which they detail “The Decalogue” where the Priest would read each of the Commandments, and the congregation would respond with “Lord, have mercy upon us, and give us grace to keep this law.”

{read the Decalogue together} In doing this, the commandments remain in front of the people

Interestingly enough, this upcoming session of Boost will be considering that very concept of sin is rooted in the first commandment – that there shall be no other god before me – that sin is essentially idolatry. “God's at War” is a book and video series that will help identify common idols in your life and offer solutions for breaking those idols down. {watch this}

So if you are interested in joining Pastor Mike on this journey of declaring war on the idols in your life, we want you to join us on Wednesday nights starting in 10 days. Sign up at the Welcome Center so we can prepare for you – kids: we have things planned for you, as well!!

In this series, we have looked at the nature of God (the Trinity – crazy relational and focused on deep and meaningful connections); we looked at scripture last week by realizing that it's primarily the only way we can understand who God truly is ... by seeing his nature engage and mingle with mankind. That is what makes the Gospel story so compelling – that God would come to his creation, take on the limitations and form of humanity, and live among his people. He felt every human emotion, he felt every human temptation – yet Jesus remained free from the bondage of sin because he had a clearer picture of who he truly was (he understood himself – he followed the word of His Father – he prepared the way for the Holy Spirit).

This leads me to my big point of the day ... **Sin can only be understood and identified as we intentionally and actively direct our life toward God.** We could spend more time today reading passages of scripture that identify specific actions and attitudes considered sin. I could compile a list of sins for us all today – I found a couple on the internet (one had 141 sins ... another had 667 of

them listed). Instead of doing that, what I feel is most important for us to grasp today is that as we look into the wisdom found in God's Word, what we are truly doing is gazing into the eyes of God himself ... and as we do that, we get a clearer picture of who He is, then we see a stronger picture of who we are to become which helps us understand what we are to not become.

Earlier I mentioned that our theological understanding of sin is connected to a willful act of disobedience toward God. All the words we considered earlier imply an inclination to do that what you know is wrong – but you do it anyway. Eve knew that she shouldn't eat from the tree – yet she bought a lie that said she'll be better for it. Adam was with her – never stopped her – he willingly did what he knew was wrong and thought to himself, "I'll show God who has this all figured out."

Since the beginning of time, we have been taking God off of the throne of our heart and we put our own desires and motives there instead ... {bitterness, pride, lust, gossip, laziness, profanity, deceitfulness, lover of money, rage, hypocrisy, greed, drunkenness, corruption, lover of self, coveting, anger ... and the list can go on and on} For some – our own faith becomes a snare because we become prideful about our service to the church or our own spiritual disciplines.

As you journey toward a loving God ... and as you see him more clearly ... sin will begin to leave a bitter taste in your mouth. Your desires will shift and your interests will transform. **Sin can only be understood and identified as we intentionally and actively direct our life toward God.** No child is ever motivated to obey their parent without first concluding within them that they desire to be close to their parent, maybe even be just like them. That's what makes parenting teenagers such a struggle – teens have lost their belief that their parents are worth being like – in fact – though not in my house – most teens want to avoid being like their parents ... which leads to civil unrest and turmoil (to put it mildly).

But when that child begins life and looks up their creator (parent) and says "I wanna be just like you, dad, I'm gonna be just like you" there's a clearer vision of what to become – and what to avoid.

Next week we are going to explore fully the solution to our sin problem but we can't leave you today without offering more than a glimpse of hope.

Romans 5:12 ... **When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. 13 Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. ~~But it was not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break. 14 Still, everyone died from the time of Adam to the time of Moses—even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did.~~ Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come. 15 But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ.**

Later Paul says, **"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."** (Romans 6:23 NLT)

Sin does not need to wreck your life and your home. Sin wants to steal and destroy you – not make you more popular or fill your pockets with cash. Sin is not interested in making life more enjoyable – sin is interested in destroying your soul. Sure it might seem like momentary pleasures but in the end, sin take you down the path of misery.

Last month we had a night designated to come and pray through the Lord’s Prayer with interactive steps ... one of those steps was “lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil” and to bring this point home, we had established several buckets with rocks that we had to pick up as a reminder of our temptations and sin. But the cool part was that we delivered those rocks at the foot of the cross and surrendered them back to the Lord – we confessed our weakness and our sin to Him in doing that.

We thought we’d like to do that again this morning ... {instructions}

* if you’d like to participate ... you don’t have to ...

* search me and know me – see if there be any wicked way in me and lead on the path everlasting

* Altars are open too if you’d like to pray before or after you’ve responded

Prayer ...

Response ... Chain Breaker