

SEPARATION FROM SIN:
The Neglected Doctrine
Message 3
Text: Psalm 51:1-13

INTRO: I have called the doctrine of separation the neglected doctrine. In true salvation, the Lord separates us from the world and places us in the kingdom of His dear Son (Col. 1:13). From then on He is in the process of separating us from sin. That is the process of sanctification, or being made holy, and holiness is separation from sin. 1 Peter 1:13-16 says, "Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."

Hebrews 12:14-16 says, "Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright."

In the first message we dealt with separation from sin in the world. We dealt mainly with what the world is. I mentioned the connection between the phrases; the world, and this age. I mentioned in the last message that the Bible speaks of the sons of this age. Those are the lost (Luke 16:8). It speaks of the god of this age. That is the Devil (2 Cor. 4:4). It speaks of the rulers of this age. Those are the demonic forces (1 Cor. 2:6-8). It speaks of the wisdom of this age. That is the wisdom of lost mankind (1 Cor. 1:20, 2:6 etc...).

Then it speaks of those who have been delivered out of this present evil age. Those are Christians (Gal. 1:4). And Romans 12:2 speaks of the fashions of this evil age. So we spent the last message on separating ourselves from identification with this world or this age by our external appearance.

I want to now look more closely at some of the individual sins listed in the Bible. I will not deal with the broad matter of the sins of omission; that is, not doing what we should do. Rather, we will focus on the sins of commission; doing that which we are not to do. In this message we will seek to define

sin, and then look at some of the broader classification of sin. We will be looking at individual sins. But the individual sins we will be looking at fall under broad classifications of sin. And we will look at those first.

C. FROM INDIVIDUAL SINS

1. Definition of sin

Although I have touched on the definition of sin, in times past let me define sin once more. Since we have covered this before, could someone tell me what sin is? Yes, it means to miss the mark. Go to Genesis 4. Lucifer had introduced sin to the angels, and he introduced sin to Adam, through Eve and Adam fell for it; and he passed on a sin nature to his sons and they fell for it too.

We are introduced to those first two sons in Genesis 4. And one of those two sons learned the truth about sin, repented and lived for the Lord. The other son also learned the truth but refused to be separated from sin and sought to please God in his own way, which is by works, and he became the first murderer. He murdered his brother, who was a believer.

Now look at verses 1-7 (read). So, here we have the first murderer and the first martyr. Why would Cain take out his anger on his brother who was righteous? Well, the answer to that is the answer to all persecution today. Those who do not do well, are convicted by those who do well. The solution for them is to get rid of those who produce conviction. You see, light exposes, and those who live in darkness hate the light; they hate exposure.

So look at verse 7 (read). Here we have the first occurrence of the word 'sin'. It is the Hebrew word 'chawtaw'. It is a noun which comes from the verb "chata". And it means to miss the mark.

The first occurrence of the word 'sin' in the NT is Matthew 12:31 (read). The word for sin here is 'hamartia', and once again, when referring to wrongdoing, it means to miss the mark.

Now let me ask, because we have covered this numerous times in the past, what mark does sin miss? It is the

mark of the perfect will and character of God. When I think a thought I should not think, do a deed I should not do, or don't do a deed I should do; or say a word I should not say, I have missed the mark of the perfect will and character of God. So someone quote for us Romans 3:23, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." And what is the glory of God? It is who He is, and we can't take more time for that here because I have covered it so many times in the first question of our Catechism.

And when we sin, sin must be dealt with before we can go to heaven. That is why the doctrine of separation from sin is so very important.

3. Broad categories of sins

Now there are some words used in Scripture that I think are rather a category of sin. There seem to be various categories of sin.

a. Transgression

The first word we want to look at that covers many other sins is the word transgression. The verb translated to transgress in the OT is *awbar*. It means to pass over or by, or through. With regard to God's commandments it is to pass over the commandment and do one's own thing. It is to disregard what God has said.

The noun translated a transgression in the OT is *Pesha*. It is a rebellion against God's law and breaks man's relationship with God. I think the literal idea behind this word is a misstep, a stepping to one side, or an overstepping. Webster's 1828 Dictionary says of transgression that it means to pass over or beyond any limit. In our topic of sin, it is to overstep God's law and do one's own thing.

Turn to Numbers 14. When Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt and then through the Red Sea. When they passed over the Red Sea, from there Moses eventually sent out 12 spies to spy out the land they were to take over. Well, 10 spies came

back with a very fearful report, but two said, "It's no problem. The Lord will deliver us."

Now look at 14:1-4 (read). We read on (5-10). Well, Moses spoke to God on behalf of Israel, because God wanted to destroy them, and the Lord relented. Now look at 20-25 (read). Now they were headed in the direction of Canaan. And directly before them were Amalekites and Canaanites. And God instructed Moses to turn and to head into the wilderness.

So let us read 26-39. Well, when Moses told them they would now wander 40 years in the wilderness and die off in the wilderness. The 10 spies with the bad report would also die off. But the two spies with a good report would live. Well, now the people were sorry for their failure to heed the ten and they decided, "We're going in anyway. No matter what God says, we are not turning aside. We are going to beat these Canaanites and enter the land anyway. We should never have disobeyed in the first place."

So look at verse 40-43 (read). Moses said, "Why do you transgress (that is to step over, go beyond what God said) for this cannot succeed. If you go, you are going without the Lord and you will fail." So look at verse 44 (read).

But what did they do? They transgressed. They went beyond what God had said. You see, a root idea of what is affected by such an overstepping is to cause to harm relationships. And another idea is that of rebellion against something that causes this fracture in relationships. It is a stepping over some line of right and wrong that affects relationships. So look at verses 44-45 (read). Those were the consequences of transgression.

There was a very important time in King David's life when he had been settled into his kingdom. He had taken over after Saul as King. It was a dangerous time of life for him because he was now king and he did not personally need to go to war anymore. His troops were out fighting and he was

relaxing. And then he found this beautiful woman and he took her though she belonged to one of those warriors out there fighting for Israel.

Well, he thought he could get away with about anything and he had this woman's man killed, took the woman and married her. Now God loved this man David, but He could not let him get away with this and he sent his prophet to David and he put the spotlight of God's Word on his heart, and there stood this sin as big and as black as anything he had ever seen.

And then sorrow of sin set in. You see, it is God that speaks to our hearts about our sins. Whatever reveals our sins is light.

Go to Psalm 51 (read 1-3). David is in trouble. Conviction has set in on his heart. He needs to acknowledge his sins. Look at verse 6. Oh how God can search out our inward parts. You can't see it on the outside, but God's spotlight can just bring it to light inside. I know of no worse moment in life.

And now David begins to hunger for cleansing. Oh to be clean inside. Look at verse 7 (read). Do you know what hyssop was used for? It was used like a stiff brush, or these curly metal things women use to scrub pots. It was like sandpaper. And David knows to cleans what he has done will take something with very strong pokies on it.

Do you know what he longs for? Look at it in verse 8 (read). Oh, to have joy once more. Oh Lord, why did I ever do this? If you cleans me I will never do it again. Oh this is crushing! It is enough to break my bones. Look at his cry in verses 9-13 (read). Oh blessed cleansing. Oh blessed forgiveness from transgressions.

And Proverbs 28:13 says, "He who covers his sins (our word transgressions) will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy." I can tell you of a lot of things sweeter than confession. I can tell you of nothing sweeter

than to have ones transgressions forgiven and cleansed away.

That in brief is transgression. It is to overstep the boundaries set up by God.

2. Iniquity

Another classification of sin is iniquity. The Hebrew word is 'awvon'. The basic idea is 'to bend', or 'twist' or 'distort'. Earlier we looked at Cain and Able. Go back to Genesis 4 (read 1-7). Cain had sinned. He had missed the mark. But what was his sin?

Look now at verses 8-13 (read). Now in verse 13 Cain says, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." The word translated 'punishment' is the word 'awvon'. He had bent, or twisted, or distorted God's truth. God had said to bring a blood sacrifice, and he brought vegetables. You see, Cain did things his own way. He twisted God's truth and thought God would accept interpretation of what was right and what was wrong.

When we do any kind of works to seek to please God or to cover for sins, like baptism, Bible reading or prayer; those things become a twisting of God's truth. And we expect God to accept our way.

Go to Psalm 51 once more. Look at verse 2 (read). Not only had David transgressed, he had committed iniquity. How does a man like David, who knew God so well, fall into a sin like he did? Oh, the devil is slick. Sometimes when we want something we are not supposed to have, we justify things in our mind. We are tremendously good at justifying ourselves. And David must have justified his actions in his own heart.

Then when it became obvious that his sin would find him out do you know what he did? Do you know how desperately David tried to cover his sin? He sent for Uriah, the husband of the woman he had taken, from the war. Asked him to go home to be with his wife. You see, he was involved in all kinds of violations.

And then God sent the prophet Nathan to him. Oh, how wicked are our hearts. We can justify ourselves into doing all kinds of things. But when the Lord in one way or another discovers our heart to us, oh what a fix we find ourselves in. And if we stand fast in our pride, like Cain, we kill the light God uses to shine on our sin.

But, if we are like David, we will deal with our sin. And oh what peace God multiplies to those who confess their sins. Scripture says, "Great peace have they that love Your law!"

But oh, how destructive iniquity can be. Go to Acts 1 (read 25-26). I think the word translated transgression here carries more the idea of iniquity as it is used in the OT. In these verses they had chosen an apostle to take Judas's part so look now at verses 25-26.

It says that Judas by transgression fell. The word translated transgression is the word parabasis. It means to go by the side, or pass over, or to overstep. That is the idea of the word 'awvon'. And when it says that Judas fell by transgression, that is the word used.

I expect that Judas, because he wanted riches, was somehow so able to twist truth as to justify in his mind that he was doing the right thing. Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?" Jesus said in Matthew 15:19, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies..." And what is the heart? It is our mind, the place where we do all our twisting and turning of God's truth.

I was told of a woodworking shop sign that said, "Many fancy twistings and turnings done here." That is the sign that should hang over our minds, our hearts. Here we twist and turn God's law until it suits our wants.

3. Error

Another broad classification of sin is the sin of error. The basic idea is that of going astray. Go to Leviticus 4 (read 1-3). If you look at the word, 'ignorance', there is the sin of error or we might call it the sin of ignorance. In the OT the word is 'shegagah'.

Now, you see, what we must understand is that if we inadvertently sin, it is still a sin. It must still be atoned for. You can read the rest of the chapter that speaks of that. A sacrifice had to be brought.

This winter I heard of a man in another part of Alberta. He is related to a family in our church and I asked them if that family member would let me have that story and he sent it to me. It happened this past fall. Let me read it, *On November 21, it was getting to be toward the end of the hunting season, and disappointed that I had not made the mule deer draw, my boys begged me to go hunting. I decided to go and buy a general white, tail deer tag, even though I hardly ever see white tailed deer in the area. I hunt mainly to take my boys out. I had not read the hunting regulations and just assuming that I could shoot antlered or antlerless deer.*

Early that November morning we packed the gun and drove down to the river bottom close to our house and took a long walk in search of deer. We saw one, but didn't get a chance to shoot at it. Giving up on the river bottom we went to check some fields.

When we came up to the road we spotted 3 white tail in our pasture, which was very unusual. They took off running onto my boss's land. W drove to the other side of the field where they were heading, and we went onto the boss's yard. The deer were now about 300 yards away.

I rested my gun on the old fence and shot at one of them. It dropped after running about 25 yards. We all got in the truck and drove up to it. The deer was still very much alive so my oldest son

asked to take the next shot to kill it, which he did, and was quite excited about it.

Nobody witnessed us shooting the deer, but for some reason I didn't feel quite right about the whole situation. Since the deer was young I thought it looked like a mule deer. We tagged and loaded the deer and took it home.

I shared with my wife Mary, the whole situation. She then started to question me as to what I would do about it. The boys were eager to start skinning and the butchering process, and kept asking when we could start. By this time I was pacing the floor and wondering what would be best. Years back before I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior I wouldn't have thought twice about it, and would just have put it in the freezer. Chances of getting caught were next to none, if I just kept quiet about it now, and maybe there was nothing wrong with shooting the deer I shot, I thought.

By this time my boys had figured out there was something not quite right. After much pacing the floor and thinking about it, I finally came to the conclusion I needed to make that call to the Fish and Wildlife office. This was not an easy thing to do for me, knowing that if anything was wrong I would lose my hunting privileges for at least a year and a hefty fine, which I definitely could not afford.

I then called the wildlife office and told them that I have shot the wrong kind of deer. She then had a wildlife officer call me back a little later. He then got back to me and said it was definitely a white tail. He then asked where I had shot it. I told him the area. He told me I was not allowed to shoot antlerless in that particular area. My heart dropped thinking now I'd be in big trouble with the law.

Being a Christian, the leader of my home and raising a young family I know this was definitely the right thing to do, to be a godly example. I know the Lord would bless me for it.

The wildlife officer then asked to meet him in Pincher Creek, because he was quite busy and it is about 40 minutes away. I agreed to meet him. The wildlife officer then decided to take the deer from me and charged me with hunting without a licence. He could have charged me with possession of wildlife as well, but thankfully decided against that.

The wildlife officer then wrote me up to appear in court on February 4, 2016. We went home thinking the only way we would be able to go hunting next year was if my oldest son would get his wildlife certificate, because I would lose my privileges.

About 3 weeks later the wildlife officer called me and told me that he needed to give me another ticket because the date was wrong on the first one. He had written February 4 but court was actually February 3. Had I not agreed to meet up with him again, it would have been thrown out of court because of the wrong date. I knew I was guilty, so I met up with him so he could give me the right ticket.

This is not something I am proud of and didn't even tell my boss until the day before court that I needed time off. Being a believer in Jesus I know he is capable of doing the impossible. I prayed that the law would have mercy on me and bring the fine down to a minimum, which was about \$2,000.00. Mary, on the other hand, prayed that everything would be thrown out at court, and no fine would be given. I must say I didn't have the faith that this would happen to me. Losing my hunting privileges was mandatory for such cases.

February 3rd came and it was time to go to court. I took the whole family along as they were very anxious what would happen to me. I was going to go talk to the Duty Council in the morning, so he could bring my case before the judge but the line-up was too long and decided to deal with it myself.

Break time came and my name had not been called yet. We went out to eat and then came back to the court house. I felt that maybe I should go talk to the Duty Council (free lawyer). I went into his office to give him my story. It turned out I was supposed to talk to the other duty council, but he said he would go talk to him.

My family went back into the court house to wait for my case to come up, but the Duty Council guy came and called me into the foyer. He had the other Duty Councillor with him as well. He told me how thankful he was for my honesty, which they hadn't seen in years, and that everything had been dealt with, and that I was free to go.

The councillor then gave a lengthy speech to my family. He encouraged them to always be honest and to follow their Dad's example and to do what their dad said. Not knowing exactly what he meant, I thought he meant they should do what their dad told them to do once they were back in the courtroom.

But he said, "No, you can go home now. You are free of the charges. They charges have been dropped." "Praise the Lord", I said with great joy. There was a tear in the other councillor's eye during this heart felt speech.

This has touched my family in a very special way. God is truly there, in the time of trouble and is the One we can always depend on. It's best to always do the right thing, even if it could get us into trouble. Just knowing things are dealt with and out of the way is worth doing right. Nothing is impossible with God.

Now let me make application from this true story. How many times in the course of events could this man not have talked himself out of turning himself in, and even after he did, he might have had the charges dropped because of an error on the part of the Game warden?

And what happens when we are in an error, and we excuse ourselves? Well, the possibility is there

of going off altogether. The other possibility is to live fruitlessly or pass a bad spirit down to our children.

Turn to 2 Peter 3. In 2 Peter 3, Peter warns us of how we should live in light of the fact that this world is going to be destroyed and there will be a new one. Look at verses 14-16. Notice that people 'twist' the Scriptures. We looked at that sin already. But look now at verse 17 (read). Now this word 'error' in the NT has the idea of wandering. It comes from the word planees, from which we get our word planets. And the planets got that name because unlike the stars that are stationary, planets wander. They move. And here believers are warned of wandering from the truth and being led away with the error of the wicked. One can be unknowingly led into error.

Take the Church of today. We were led astray by teachings like unconditional love, unconditional grace, unconditional forgiveness and unconditional eternal security. And millions of Christians think they are doing right when they are being led astray.

Israel was led astray like that in the OT by Balaam until they lived in gross immorality. Look at 2 Peter 2 (read 15-18). Now look closely at verse 18. Look at how the error of Balaam worked. Great swelling words of emptiness. There is modern psychology. It wants to lead into the lust of the flesh and work through lewdness, unbridled lust. And who is in danger here? Those who had actually escaped from those who live in error; a way that has wandered from the truth. Jude 11 speaks of this same error.

We had ministerial meeting the other day and we have our devotional time together with the ladies. And one of the ladies mention a verse that spoke of the spirit of error and I was all ears. Go to 1 John 4 (read verse 6). You see, there is a spirit of error. It is a spirit that causes us to wander from the truth. We are led off unawares.

Let me take you now to another passage. Turn to Galatians 6 (read verse 1). I am asked sometimes if this is a church discipline passage. Let me quote from another message I did. "Now there are two interpretations of this verse. One, someone has been caught in a sin red handed; and two, a fellow Christian has fallen into something that is wrong, but he is not aware of it. Maybe a fellow Christian got into some gambling that appeared quite innocent, or some money making scheme or maybe a lady, unawares is wearing clothing that she should not be wearing, or maybe some man has made too much of hunting or fishing. It is this kind of thing this passage has in view, as I see it. It is this view I believe is the case in this passage. So the problem is not one where outright sin needs to be dealt with. And the procedure given is not excommunication. It is given like this: 'You who are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness lest you also be tempted.' This passage, in my view does not deal with an obvious sin."

But, you see, if unintentional sins are not dealt with they can become a matter for church discipline when more serious sins, to which such will lead, take place. We need to go to one more passage. Turn to James 5 (read 19-20). Notice in verse 19, this person wanders from the truth. The word is the verb *planaw*, he 'planets' from the truth, wanders from the truth. And the one who turns him from the error of his way will save a soul from death. You see, sin always moves and always gets progressively worse.

CONCL: We have covered this morning three major classifications of sin, and that only very, very briefly. The first was to transgress. To go beyond. To step over God's law and thus rebel against Him. This, of course cuts off one's relationship with Him. The Israelites wanted to head to the land of Canaan without God in their midst, and it ended up in tragedy.

Then we considered iniquity. Now let me say something about such words as transgression and iniquity. Our English translations will sometimes translate a number of different Hebrew or Greek

words by one English word, and not all occurrences of the same word may necessarily speak of the same sin. But the word iniquity has with it the idea of twisting the truth. And we do it to suit our desires. Oh how we can wangle things to our own benefit, when in actual fact it is a twisting of truth.

Then there are unintentional sins. How well can we not twist the truth when it comes to such sins. In closing, let me share with you how our deer hunter ended his story: *It's best to always do the right thing, even if it could get us into trouble. Just knowing things are dealt with and out of the way is worth doing right.*