

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DEAL RADICALLY WITH SIN?

DATE: SUNDAY, 28TH OF MARCH 2021 | JESUS: PART 1

TALK
IT OVER

MATTHEW 18:6-9

"If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come! If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell."

NOTE TO LEADERS:

Please remind your group about our drive-through communion and coffee on Good Friday from 08h00 to 10h00.

It's a great opportunity for groups and families to share in communion as we remember the incredible sacrifice Christ made for us.

START TALKING

1. Was there an image or a story that stood out to you from Sunday's message?
2. Can you think of a time when you, growing up, or your children more recently, got into a huge fight with a sibling or friend? What was it about?

START THINKING

1. Read Matthew 18:6-9. Why do you think that Jesus uses such strong imagery when He talks about dealing with sin?
2. Think about the image of our selfish nature being a "runway" that is a safe place for sin to land in our hearts. Do you agree that selfishness opens us up to sin? Why or why not?

START SHARING

1. Iain shared about a time when God's word and the Holy Spirit worked against a lie that had taken root in his heart. Share about a time when God's word brought home a truth that you needed to hear.
2. Is there a particular area where you find it most difficult to trust in God (e.g. finances, career, your love life, your children)? What temptation does distrust give rise to in this area?

START PRAYING

1. Does anyone have an area or a relationship where sin has brought death or destruction? We know God can restore, no matter the circumstance, and would love to pray with you for healing and restoration.
2. Iain shared that Jesus is the only One who can give us victory over sin. Would anyone like to hand their fight over to Him by receiving salvation

today, or to ask for His help in battling a specific sin?

START DOING

Spend some time in quiet prayer this week, asking God to show you if there are any areas in your life where distrust of Him has taken hold. Pray that He will help you to trust Him again as you surrender those areas to Him.

SUMMARY

OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

This Sunday, Iain shared a message about Jesus' radical view of sin, what sin does in our lives as believers, and how as we aim to live a Christ-like life, our approach to sin needs to be just as radical as His was as we aim to stamp it out completely.

"If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come! If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell." Matthew 18:6-9.

1. What is sin?

Sin is not easily explained! We see in the Matthew passage that Jesus took it very seriously, and we know how it works out - in actions like lying, stealing, and murder, but what is the root cause of these actions? Sin is, simply, the opposite of God and what is good. It is wrongdoing and disobedience to God's laws - it means failing to do what is right in the eyes of God. It is violent, loveless, and premeditated. It takes the good things that God has given us and spoils and perverts them. It is like a parasite, looking for a host that it can devour and kill.

At the root of sin, though, is our automatic response to be self-centred. *"For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice."* James 3:16. We are naturally selfish, having inherited a sinful nature right from Adam and Eve, and our inherent selfishness provides footholds for sin to take hold in our hearts.

Throughout Romans 1, 2, and 3, Paul explains how this natural selfishness stems from believing a lie about God - that we would be better off on our own:

- *"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him."* Romans 1:21
- *"...and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images..."* Romans 1:23
- *"They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator."* Romans 1:25

It is our distrust of God that underpins our inclination to sin: *"Often my sin reveals what I am doubting about God at that moment."* - Rick Warren. If I live by fear, I am doubting God's promises and protection; if by guilt, I am doubting God's ability and desire to forgive me. Sin is so many things, but at the root of it is our selfishness and our reliance on ourselves rather than on God.

2. What does sin do in our lives?

- **Sin breaks our fellowship with God.** *"But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."* Isaiah 59:2
- **Sin wants to devour you.** In Genesis 4:7, it says: *"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."*

- **Sin kills stuff.**

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:23.

"Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." James 1:15

Jesus wants people to take sin seriously! Its destructive power is huge, and it needs to be dealt with.

3. How do we deal with sin?

a) Take your sin seriously, or it will take you out.

"Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come! If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire." Matthew 18:7-8

We have to take responsibility for our own sin, choosing to deal radically with it. We need to hate our sin as much as the Father did to send His son to die in order to take it out! The biggest mistake we can make is to minimize or ignore sin in our lives, because where sin is present, something is dying.

b) Acknowledge what Jesus has done for you

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved." Ephesians 2:1-5

When we acknowledge the penalty our sin deserves and the price Jesus has paid to save us from it, it begins to erode that internal selfishness that allows sin to thrive. As we remember, often, the grace of Jesus, we become so aware of His love and mercy that we learn to value it above all else. Jesus's work on the cross is a finished work! Because He has died for us, there is nothing we can add to it - we can only receive it and walk in the victory that Jesus gives us. *"...salvation is found in no-one else."* Acts 4:12. We cannot save ourselves! Jesus is the One who saves

c) Go to war daily with weapons of DIVINE POWER

"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:3

These weapons are the word of God (the Bible), and the Holy Spirit who comes to live in us. They empower us to know the truth and to live victorious over sin.

Sin is a force of destruction that will eradicate anything of value that it can find, and there is only one power that can set us free from it - His name is Jesus, and with the divine power and weapons He gives us, we can go to war with sin and live free and victorious!