

Biblical Theology by Dr. Chuck Baynard

Lesson 47 (HCLD 32)¹

Preparation: Begin and end each study time with prayer. Pay particular attention to the background reading and pray over each passage asking God to reveal Himself to you.

Background Reading: Read all the Scripture verses in footnote # 1 & 2.

Question: Are all transgressions of the law of God equally heinous in themselves, and in the sight of God?

Answer: All transgressions of the law of God are not equally heinous; but some sins in themselves, and by reason of several aggravations, are more heinous in the sight of God than others.[1]²

“Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.” (1 John 3:4). Here in the Scriptures we find the real definition of sin. David says that all sin is against God. While we find in the English Bible the little word also concerning the transgression of the law, whereby we might conclude that then sin must have another element involved. This is true in that it is impossible for there to be such a thing as a victimless crime in that sin taints all it touches. Thus when man sins; he involves others, if only in their silence thus condoning his sin. Nonetheless, the bible is the truth and ultimately all sin is against God for we cannot treat another unrighteously without breaking God’s law-word. Thus a child who disobeys his parents has wronged his parents, but the sin is against God because God has said “children obey your parents in the Lord...” (Ephesians 6:1). I do not think anyone who has paid the least attention to the Ten Commandments as the Westminster Divines have used them for the head of ten tables of the whole of Scripture would debate the truth that there is not one sin among men that does not transgress God’s law. A holy God cannot, will not tolerate such actions without applying His perfect wrath in just punishment of this transgression.

As I have noted elsewhere, but I think it needs repeated here, there are two aspects to sin. Sin has an eternal price, which Christ paid for the elect on the cross, accepted by God as full payment thereof with the witness of the empty tomb ever before man as to this great truth. Nonetheless there remains a dichotomy we need understand. A Christian can sin, in fact will sin every day either by direct violation of the law of God, or by not doing what God has told Him to do. Sin has two natures one of what man does and the other that which is left undone. All sin costs the elect two prices, or perhaps we could say has elements that will be collected now, and elements that will be collected in eternity. Sin removes from the heavenly reward and brings human misery in this life.

Sin always results in human misery. There is not one single thing in the universe that touches evil or not being of good that is not the direct result of sin. The affect comes from the original sin and the resulting curse, or more directly in the circumstances that surround the saints of God throughout history. The second payment in eternity deals with the reward due the saints on entering glory, or lack of it for

¹ **The Heidelberg Catechism, Third Part: Of Thankfulness Lord’s Day 32**

Q86: Since, then, we are redeemed from our misery by grace through Christ, without any merit of ours, why must we do good works?

A86: Because Christ, having redeemed us by His blood, also renews us by His Holy Spirit after His own image, that with our whole life we show ourselves thankful to God for His blessing,[1] and that He be glorified through us;[2] then also, that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by the fruits thereof;[3] and by our godly walk may win others also to Christ.[4]

1. Rom. 6:13; 12:1-2; 1 Peter 2:5, 9-10, 12; 1 Cor. 6:20; 2. Matt. 5:16; 1 Peter 2:12 3. Matt. 7:17-18; Gal. 5:6, 22-23 4. Rom. 14:19; 1 Peter 3:1-2; 11 Peter 1:10

Q87: Can they, then, be saved who do not turn to God from their unthankful, impenitent life?

A87: By no means, for, as Scripture says, no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or the like shall inherit the kingdom of God.[1]

1. 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Eph. 5:5-6; 1 John 3:14-15

² John 19:11; Ezek. 8:6, 13, 15; 1 John 5:16; Psalms 78:17, 32, 56

misdeeds during their journey through life. Here we are dealing with the elect, and it is from this perspective that I speak.

We could at this time point out the various aspects of the Christian life which sin affects, but that has been handled other places and my desire is for all to know how close to the surface of each sin lies, and that it is only by constant reliance on Christ and the indwelling Spirit man can even begin to live apart from the pits of hell clinging longingly to his flesh. Sin only becomes sin in the brilliant light of God's law. "For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Romans 5:13).

Rest here a moment before God's throne in prayer and ask God to show you the depth of all sin as measured in its foul odor before His altar. While the Scriptures are clear that there are degrees of sin, understand that all sin is offensive to God. The avoidance of sin must be complete. Yet, not to distraction lest we come under its bondage after we have been made free from it in Christ. This is where that piety the world so hates today and many within the Christian family use the word as being derogatory comes to me as being an essential of the Christian individual. We find then that by an overt obedience to God, not from the fear of sin, but in love for the great salvation He has bestowed, the avoidance of sin in defiance to human nature becomes as a second nature requiring little conscious thought. Return then to the source of all grace and power of God who has revealed Himself in the Bible. Drink deeply from this law-word until it literally pours from every cell of your body. God's very word must flow as easily as the profane words that we all carried about before the manifestation of our election in Christ to occupy glory.

Now this does not mean that the Christian does not sin! Indeed we do both in thought and deed. However it does mean that we understand the offense is toward God and there is an immediate sorrow that we would so offend God, and a confession and request for forgiveness of God is immediate and natural to the regenerated child. We should not conclude then that because of the ever-present sin the Christian is a person of sorrow and shame. Because, within the very soul lies the great truth that God is our Father and as often as we do confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive them. There is in the elect a profound joy from knowing they are God's children and that they are justified in His sight by right of passage from death to life in Jesus Christ, and that life eternal. So rather than traveling through life with a load of guilt, the true child leaps with joy, his heart and lips praising the God of Glory for the grace bestowed. But, no mere lip service this, but the songs of the soul freed from bondage forever more.

Man cannot walk through this veil of tears unspotted from the flesh. Conceived and born in sin and it would seem destined to be ever separated from his glorious creator by his own deeds. How short of the fullness of the truth the first petal appears to come then in simply holding up the total depravity of man. We need behind this mere statement this understanding of the horror of all sin against a holy God. There is great need for the reformed understanding that this is so vast it covers all of the faculties of the created, and that none escape this destiny apart from salvation in Christ. The sure necessity of petal two in face of such horror and corruption should be universal. The joy and song released by the third petal seen by all, but enjoyed eternally only by the elect that by grace alone and for His own glory alone God has saved any from the fires of hell.. How gracious that it is of God for us to both to will and to do, that for the elect there is no escape of God's grace. The comfort that comes from knowing that petal five is true and none can snatch us from the hand of the Father is without limit. One can only wonder how it is possible for there to even be life apart from such eternal communion with the Creator. Should not such knowledge burn so brightly the beast itself would humbly follow the Master? Yet we know the truth of the matter is that we all need such constant reminders as God has so graciously given us in His Word that we must strive to live this godly life, and that our best efforts would be but dung except for the grace of God bestowed. I cannot understand how any can miss such beauty as the Reformed faith has revealed in sharing God's beautiful TULIP from His Word. Yet what appear to be sisters and brothers in Christ continue to spread what can be at best, mere distortions of God's truth as they allow the evil will of the creature a place in the Sovereign's garden. Such error will remove the heart of the Gospel, and place yet another burden upon the back of one so heavily laden in sin, even the fear of transgressing the God who has loved them so much.

The manifestation of election comes in many ways and at different times for the children of God. Thus I hesitate to label that which I have no way of knowing whether it is true or not as of the family. I do know that the beauty of the Reformed faith was not meant to be hidden within the walls of the church, but to be lived out in community before the entire world that as a flower attracts a bee, so should our TULIP provide the nectar of life to the sinner. With patience and love, God will use our lives as living flowers in His unfolding history of the redemption of those called from the foundation of the earth. The question then must be, are you standing tall in the garden of love awaiting the first tentative touch of the wayward child of the Lord? Or are you a heavily armed prayer warrior clothed in self-righteousness so fierce in appearance all but the boldest shrink from your presence? I think we know what God would desire, and what the truth of the reformation taught concerning this. It has been said that Christianity is but one beggar telling the next beggar where there is bread. How true, have you learned the directions so you may share the way to the foot of the cross of the Savior?

Sin leaves an awful stain that nothing in the world can remove. Despite its awful stench and depth of hold upon man, it will be cleansed with but one drop of the blood shed by Christ.

Suggested Sermon Outline

New Life Through the Holy Spirit

Since we are redeemed from our sin and its wretched consequences by grace through Christ without any merit of our own, why must we do good works?

Because just as Christ has redeemed us with His blood He also renews us through His Holy Spirit according to His own image, so that with our whole life we may show ourselves grateful to God for His goodness and that He may be glorified through us; and further, so that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by its fruits and by our reverent behavior may win our neighbors to Christ.

Can those who do not turn to God from their ungrateful, impenitent life be saved?

Certainly not! Scripture says, Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not *inherit* the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

I. The Spirit Sanctifies the Saved

A. Do not surrender to sin. *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.* (Romans 6:12)

1. The real power driving your life will show through in your conduct. Know ye not that *to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?* (Romans 6:16)

2. Refusal to accept sin's mastery is evidence of new life in Christ. But *I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* (Romans 7:23-24)

B. Holiness is the appropriate objective of one freed from sin. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye *present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* (Romans 12:1)

C. Redemption is in order to productive service. Ye also, as lively stones, *are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.* Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that

believeth on him shall not be confounded. *Unto you therefore which believe he is precious*: but unto them which be disobedient the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a *stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient whereunto also they were appointed. But *ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light*: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. (1 Peter 2:5-10)

II. Holiness Honors the Savior

A. Transformed lives inevitably cause other people to turn toward the source of the change. *Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father* which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

1. Righteousness compounds itself. But *the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more* unto the perfect day. (Proverbs 4:18)

2. It doesn't matter how hopeless holiness may seem, God's grace will prevail. *Arise, shine; for thy light is come*, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. For, behold, *the darkness shall cover the earth*, and gross darkness the people: *but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee*. And *the Gentiles shall come to thy light*, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. (Isaiah 60:1-3)

B. Life which does not appear changed may not be changed. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is in you*, which ye have of God, and *ye are not your own*? For *ye are bought with a price*: therefore *glorify God in your body*, and in your spirit which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

C. Changed lives teach theology in ways arguments cannot. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation*. (1 Peter 2:12)

D. The external evidence of the internal nature is inevitable. Even so *every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit*. (Matthew 7:17)

E. The good fruit which is the evidence of a changed life is far from mysterious. But *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance*: against such there is no law. And *they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts*. (Galatians 5:22-24)

F. Reverent behavior is a powerful evangelistic tool. Likewise, ye wives, *be in subjection to your own husbands*; that *if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives*; *While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear*. (1 Peter 3:1-2)

III. Absence of Holiness Is Evidence of an Unchanged Life

A. Those who continue to practice evil have no place in the coming kingdom. Know ye not that *the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God*? *Be not deceived*: neither *fornicators*, nor *idolaters*, nor *adulterers*, nor *effeminate*, nor *abusers of themselves with mankind*, Nor *thieves*, nor *covetous*, nor *drunkards*, nor *revilers*, nor *extortioners*, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10)

B. God uses strong language to condemn what modern people excuse. *A false balance is abomination to the LORD*: but *a just weight is his delight*. (Proverbs 11: 1)

C. People get returns on what they invest in - for good or for evil. *He that soweth iniquity shall reap vanity*: and the rod of his anger shall fail. (Proverbs 22:8)

D. Society's acceptance of evil practices will not excuse them to God. *Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees*, and that write grievousness *which they have prescribed*; *To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people*, that widows may be their prey, and *that they may rob the fatherless!* (Isaiah 10:1-2)

Heidelberg Catechism

Lord=s Day 32

Questions 86-87

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