

What is the gospel? Part 9: The problem of sin.
Bible reading Romans 3.9-26

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Introduction:

So far we have been looking at the gospel from the viewpoint of the person, character and work of Jesus. We have spent time looking at his work on the cross, his death and resurrection and his ascension as High Priest and King. We have done all this with a knowledge that somehow it all relates to dealing with our sin and making us right with God.

The gospel is about **God** reconciling **man** through the **cross**. We spend most of our time focussing on God, and the last few weeks looking at Jesus and the cross, so what we need to do now is look at **man**.

Having laid the most important foundation that Jesus is the only saviour, we now need to examine what we are saved from. This week we will simply define sin, as we did with the word 'gospel' at the start of this series, and then in subsequent weeks we will see how sin has been a problem in different dimensions of our lives, and created barriers and brokenness all around us and in us.

Sin is an unpopular subject, one that is even contested and yet, it is one of the most obvious and basic things we must know about if we are going to live life well; **Sin is a fact of life**

Creation declares it, we can see that we live in a marvellous creation and yet something is wrong. Human history declares it, pick any era and you will find chaos, confusion, war, hate, murder, moral corruption and bloodshed – where does it all come from? James 4.1-4 tells us it is sin at work in us. Human logic, human conscience and human experience declare it, we know there is something wrong with us, we feel bad about it, and are helpless to tackle the things we see in our newspapers if we refuse to recognise the root of the problem. Human religions recognise it, and most importantly the scriptures explain it

So, what is sin?

Biblical terms:

Deviation from a standard;

Chattah, to miss the mark or go wrong

Avon, deliberately do what is wrong, to 'forget' to help someone you had promised to help etc

Shagah, to go astray

Parabasis, to stray over a boundary, to transgress a line, to trespass

Hamartia, to miss the mark

- **whether you drive through a red light on purpose or not, you will still incur a penalty**

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- interestingly Chatah is an archery term for missing, and the Hebrew word Torah, which is Law, is an archery term for the 'sights' you clip on to help you hit the target

Description of a state;

Rasha, wicked or ungodly

Asham, to offend or be guilty

Deliberate rebellion;

Persha, to shake your fist at God

Anomia, lawlessness, rebellion – independent or opposed to the law of God

Deviating attitudes and actions;

Marah, to be contentious, rebellious and stubborn.

What do you think sin is?

It is seen in our words, actions, thoughts and attitudes. It is not doing what we should do, and doing what we should not do.

In the general confession we would ask forgiveness "for the evil we have done and the good we have not done, through negligence, through weakness though our own deliberate fault."

It is not being good enough and falling short of a required standard.

God gave us freewill, and we are all suffering the consequences of using it wrongly.

What are some of the consequences of sin?

Grieves God Gen 6.5-7

Brings guilt Ps 51.1-3

Destroys our peace with God Isa 57.21

Brings separation from God Isa 59.2

Brings judgement Matt 25.46

Enslaves us Rom 6.17

Causes spiritual blindness 2 Cor 4.4

Causes spiritual death Eph 2.12

Corrupts and spoils Titus 1.15

Disrupts all our relationships:

With God,

With others

With ourselves

With our environment

The Problems:

Perfection, of heaven and God's character

Rotten egg

Heaven is perfect, no sin, no suffering – any sin would spoil it, therefore if we have sin then we can't go in.... unless that sin is dealt with.

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Our desire for **freedom**: guinea pigs run – ‘freedom’ would mean death from the neighbour’s cat. In trying to live free we become self centred, pleasing ourselves, which means that we do things we shouldn’t and don’t do the things we should, our attempts for freedom trespass into others lives and deny them freedom – this produces a moral and spiritual debt to both God and man, which we are unable to pay, our attempts at freedom actually bring us into slavery.

Spiritual laws:

We don’t break them any more than we can break physical laws, we break ourselves on them, we cannot break the law of gravity, we can defy it for a while, but it always has the last word. A spiritual law is that we reap what we sow, and the bitter harvest of sin is death.

So we have three major bricks in our barrier between us and God, God loves us and wants us to know him, so we will see over the next few weeks how in Christ he removed the barrier so we might live with him, free and holy.

We have seen the problem, and the Bible tells us that where sin abounded, Gods grace super abounded so much more, listen to these words of Paul which give us hope in the glorious gospel:

Rom 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom 5:10 For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

Let us ‘give thanks with a grateful heart’ as we prepare ourselves to share communion together, number 124 in the hymn books.