

- “The darkest fact in man is sin. The grandest fact in God is forgiveness”

Most important question in life:
am I forgiven of my sins?

- If YES: greatest treasure
- If NO: greatest tragedy

Romans
6:23

- Biggest problem with sin is the “I” in the middle of it

What Cannot Take
Away My Sins?

I. Distance?

Ps.139:7-12

- We can see actions of a few; God knows thoughts of all from afar (v.2; 138:6)
- Ac.5:1-11
- Mk.12:41-44

Some think God is too distant to care

- Lk.15:13...

II. Ignorance?

- Mt.28¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
 - If ignorance saves, teaching is a great disservice
- Ac.10 . . . ignorant, but lost:
11¹⁴ who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.'

III. Time?

Ac.2:38

Time had erased some sins from their memory

They still needed forgiveness

Their obedience would allow God to forget.

Hb.8:12, For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.

We may forget unforgiven sins; God does not

- Gn.6:5-6
- 1 Pt.3:20 ... who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah
- 1 Sm.15:32, Then Samuel said, “Bring Agag king of the Amalekites here to me.” So Agag came to him cautiously. And Agag said, “Surely the bitterness of death is past.”
- Ex.17; Dt.25:17-19

IV. Mere Reform?

Ep.2:8-10, good works do not save from past sins

Ahab: 1 K.21:27-29. Reform is not repentance

- He feared punishment, not law of God (ch. 22)
- He changed his ways (temporarily), not his heart (ch. 22)

V. Human Reason?

Col.2⁸ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ

1 Tim.6:20 O Timothy! Guard what was committed to your trust, avoiding the profane and idle babblings and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge—21 by professing it some have strayed concerning the faith.

- Philosophers ignore sin

1000 years of classes with 'wise men' will not remove a single sin

- Most try to think their way out of problems... including sin.
- Mt.21:...25, The baptism of John — where was it from? From heaven or from men? And they reasoned among themselves, saying, **If we say**, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, Why then did you not believe him? 26, **But if we say**, 'From men,' we fear the multitude... 27, ...'We do not know.'
 - **Hypocritical ignorance**

Sinner without pain in conscience
may reach point of no return

Sin is bitter

Isa.5:20, Woe to those who call evil good,
and good evil; Who put darkness for light,
and light for darkness; Who put bitter for
sweet, and sweet for bitter.

Sin is sweet?

Pro.9:17, “Stolen water is sweet, And bread
eaten in secret is pleasant.” 18 But he does
not know that the dead are there, That her
guests are in the depths of hell.

People re-label sins . . .

- *greed* = **prudence**
- *lasciviousness* = **new morality**
- *slander* = **contending for the faith**

Jer.10:23 O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps.

- Chaldeans were coming (22)
- Jews thought alliances would save them

‘One reason sin flourishes is that it is treated like a cream puff instead of a rattlesnake’

– Billy Sunday

Ec.11:9 Rejoice, O young man, in your youth,
And let your heart cheer you in the days of
your youth; Walk in the ways of your heart,
And in the sight of your eyes; But know that
for all these God will bring you into judgment.

Irony? (1 K.22:15)

“Sow wild oats while young...”

God attaches a warning label.

Miranda rights...

VI. False Religions?

Mk.7:3-9

- The worst sin in the world
 - Jews used religion: cloak to hide hypocrisy
- 7, doctrines of men (basis of denominations)
- Church / just be sincere
 - Archaeology: religious sacrifices

8-9, “It’s good to wash hands”

Religious people often trust spiritual leaders for salvation

VII. Excuses?

Exodus 32 – Aaron’s amazing excuses

Excuses are habit forming...and fatal

“It is easy enough to excuse yourself to hell,
but you cannot excuse yourself to heaven”

Mark Twain's, *The Terrible Catastrophe*

- Ep.2:1-3
- “But God...”
 - Ep.2:4, But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us
 - Ep.2:13, But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

“But God...” [Ep.2:4 . . . 13]

“What” can wash away my sins?

- Jn.1:29, the Lamb
- Mt.26:26-28, the blood

“When” does He wash away my sins?

- Ac.22:16, the “when”