

THE FOREST HILL NEWS

Published weekly by the Forest Hill church of Christ

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Forest Hill Church of Christ

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VISIT US SOON!

Sunday:

Bible Study..... 9:30 A..M.
Morning Worship.. ...10:30 A.M.
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

Wednesday:

Bible Study7:00 P.M.

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WHAT IS SIN?

(Part Three)

Barry M. Grider

THE REALITY OF SIN

Some would scoff at the idea of sin. Flip Wilson's comedy routine during the 1970's would often include the flippant statement- - "The Devil made me do it," as if sin's greatest perpetrator was not to be taken seriously. Later, during the 1990's, on NBC's Saturday Night Live, Dana Carvey played the "church lady" who, once more, spoke sarcastically about the Devil's reality. If one can mock the idea of Satan, he will not take sin seriously.

Yet, if one is honest, he realizes sin's reality. Sin can be seen through:

1. Observation. Consider the headlines today and one is reminded of the destructive nature of sin:

- a. War and hatred throughout the globe, which often leads to tyranny, poverty, and disease.
- b. The breakdown of the home, which has been made evident by the alarming increase in divorce.
- c. The radical homosexual agenda, which mocks the design of God.
- d. Pedophilia even among those who should be the most protective of children.
- e. Abortion and genocide
- f. Pornography
- g. Gambling
- h. Corporate scandals and corruption

Add to this list the filth that comes across the airwaves, which is often welcomed into our homes, and one observes sin's reality.

Consider also how difficult it is to make known the truth of the gospel. Religious error of every stripe is promoted and accepted. Pluralism has caused many to accept every wind of doctrine, regardless of its absurdity, to be equally valid with truth. Sin is real.

2. Experience. Ben Franklin, one of our great founding fathers, often admonished the need for self-examination. Since all have sinned, all can realize through experience the reality of sin and its consequences. Paul stated, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). How can I know the mind of Christ? What would dwell in His mind? Paul continues in the book of Philippians, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). There is the mind of Christ. Yet, all

of us know, we have not always allowed our minds to think on these things and then are reminded of sin's reality.

Consider our speech. Again Paul says, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6). Have you, dear friend, ever used your tongue in an unkind way? Have you ever told a lie? Have you ever poisoned your lips with bad language? Most likely you have done so, and thus have been reminded of sin's reality.

Consider your actions. Remember Peter penned these words of Jehovah, "...Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). If, in your life, you have committed an act that was not in harmony with God's divine will, you have known sin's reality.

3. The Word of God. Not only do we learn about sin through observation and experience, but also the Word of God establishes the reality of sin. Jesus Christ, the only man who ever lived without sinning, and thus becoming the perfect sacrifice for man's sin (2 Cor. 5:21), spoke of the Comforter that He would send. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement (John 16:8). Today, the Spirit's sword, the Word of God, reveals the reality of sin. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). The Word of God is well equipped to help us combat sin by first identifying its reality. The Psalmist wrote, "Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way" (Psa. 119:104).

"AND SUCH WERE SOME OF YOU"

Kevin D. Beard

Paul admonished the Christians in the wicked city of Corinth to lead pure lives. He listed a number of the sinful activities that were prevalent in Corinthian culture and warned that those who practiced these things would not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9-11). These people were familiar with the kinds of sins Paul listed; the culture of Corinth was filled with such wickedness. However, Paul wanted these saints to understand the difference between the child of God and the child of the devil. Those outside of Christ indulged in the kinds of sins Paul condemned, but the apostle pointed out that a change had occurred in his Corinthian brothers and sisters: "and such were some of

you." In the past they had lived the kind of lifestyle Paul condemned; but now they did not.

What had brought about this change in these people? Paul's admonition included two very important facts: cleansing from sin and a change in lifestyle.

Paul used three terms to describe the Corinthians' current spiritual condition that had resulted from their being forgiven from sin: "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified" (1 Cor. 6:11). The first of these, "washed," indicates that they had been cleansed from their past sins. The Bible uses many different images to convey the true nature of sin. In contrasting sin and holiness, the Lord often compared it to being dirty and being clean. Paul spoke of our need to "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (2 Cor. 7:1). James said, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse *your* hands, *ye* sinners; and purify *your* hearts, *ye* double minded" (Jam. 4:8). John saw a vision of the Lamb's wife (the church, cf., Eph. 5:22-32; 2 Cor. 11:1), and said, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Rev. 19:8). Sin stains the soul, but the blood of Jesus cleanses it (1 John 1:7; Rev. 1:5). Nothing else could bring about this cleansing; works of human righteousness were insufficient (Tit.3:5) and animal sacrifice was powerless to take away sin (Heb. 10:4). It took the blood of the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ to purge the conscience (Heb. 9:13-14). This washing in Jesus' blood occurs when one submits to the Lord's command to be baptized (Acts 22:16).

The second term Paul used, "sanctified," indicates the renewed purpose in life that results from the cleansing with Jesus' blood. The word means, "to separate from profane things and dedicate to God." The Lord intends for the one who has been cleansed by Jesus' blood to live a life that is dedicated to the Father's service. The Greek word translated "sanctified" (*hagiazō*) is closely related to the Greek word translated "holy" (*Hagios*), and thus, children of God are to be holy (1 Pet. 1:15-16). Therefore, those who are washed and sanctified are "called to be saints" (1 Cor. 1:2).

The last word Paul used to describe these Christians' current spiritual state is "justified." This term can be thought of as a legal term. It refers to one who has been declared to be righteous. Sin's due punishment is death (Rom. 6:23), an eternal separation from God (Rev. 21:8). Since all have sinned

(Rom. 3:23), all stand condemned to die before God. However, because of the sacrifice of Christ, those who faithfully obey the Lord’s will can be justified—they can be “declared to be righteous,” even though they deserve to die because of their sin. John said Jesus was “the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 2:2), which means that His death satisfied God’s demands of justice. He died so that those who accept the salvation He offers would not have to die.

The three words “washed,” “sanctified,” and “justified” all indicate the spiritual condition of these people as God now saw them. But Paul also alluded to another aspect of their lives that played an important role in the drastic change that had taken place in them: they had ceased from the practice of sin. This point is clearly seen from the simple way Paul said, “and such **were** some of you.” Before they were washed, sanctified, and justified, some of the Corinthian Christians had been fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, and so forth, but not any more. They had ceased from the practice of those sins. Such is the force of the phrase, “and such were some of you.”

(continued next week)

*How beautiful is the day
That is touched by love*

*Mr. And Mrs. Jimmy Dan Brown
And*

*Mr. And Mrs. Edward Hill Shelton
Request the honour of your presence
At the marriage of their children*

*Susan Michelle
And*

*Matthew Henry
Friday, the fourteenth of May
Two thousand and four*

*At seven o’clock in the evening
Forest Hill Church of Christ
3950 Forest Hill Irene Road
Memphis, Tennessee*

Reception immediately following ceremony

Brother Grider completed a gospel meeting in Fayette, AL last week. This Sunday, May 2, he will begin a gospel meeting with the Pleasant Hill congregation near Milan. Brother Mosher will again preach in his absence.

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