

Faith-N-Focus : E-quip Your Faith

Bible Study Curriculum

"What Is Sin?"

Zion Assembly Church of God – Sunday School Services

“The Root of Sin”

Introduction

Today’s lesson addresses the concept of *original sin*. What is the origin of humanity’s sin? Every human being on the face of the earth is born a sinner. But why is this? Human sin can be traced back to the Garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve yielded to the temptation of Satan. Let us explore “the root of sin.”

Key Verse

“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” (Ro. 7:23).

Lesson Summary

Adam and Eve were created in the image of God for his own pleasure (Gen. 1:26-28; Re. 4:11). God gave them dominion over all other creatures and placed them in the Garden of Eden to work and care for it (Gen. 1:26, 28; 2:8, 15). The creation was perfect (Gen. 1:31). Everything in the garden was for their enjoyment, except for one tree. The Bible states, “And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:16-17). This commandment was given by God in the form of an ultimatum: “Eat it, and die.” It was God’s one prohibition for humanity. His commandment was non-negotiable; he expected Adam and Eve to comply with his one command. The Bible states, “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made” (Gen. 3:1). Eve listened to the serpent and was deceived by Satan, eating the forbidden fruit. When she gave the fruit to her husband, Adam listened to Eve and also ate the fruit which God had commanded them not to eat (vv. 4-6, 17). Through their failure, we learn a great lesson. We should never listen to anyone who contradicts the Word of God. Through their disobedience to God’s commandment, they reaped the penalty of death. Adam and Eve experienced the horrible birth of sin within them (vv. 7-11). The apostle Paul declared, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners” (Ro. 5:19). Paul taught that the root of humanity’s sinfulness originates in the Garden of Eden with Adam’s transgression and disobedience. Through Adam’s disobedience, sin is passed to all people. Thus, the sin whereby all are made sinners is a racial principle. Paul describes this principle of sin as “the law of sin” (Ro. 7:21, 23, 25). It is a principle that dominates the human race. Because of one man’s disobedience, fallen humanity is subject to this law of sin, bringing forth fruit unto death (Ro. 6:6, 7:5).

Scripture Study

The commandment of God – Gen. 2:15-17

Man’s disobedience to God’s commandment – Gen. 3:1-6; Ro. 5:19

The law of sin – Ro. 7:14-25; 6:6; Ga. 5:24-25; Ro. 8:1-2, 12-13

Conclusion

What is sin? It is a deadly principle existing in the human race from which we must be delivered through Jesus Christ (Ro. 6:17-18). Through the sanctification of the Spirit, we are delivered from the power of the law of sin so that we should no longer be the servants of sin (Ro. 6:6; 8:1-2, 12-13; Ga.5:24-25).

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Introduction “Willful Disobedience and the Christian”

As saints of God, do we sin a little every day? Jesus declared that he came to set us free from sin (Jn. 8:34-36). If we are free from sin, do we continue to sin in some ways? If we continue to sin in certain ways, are we truly free from it? Are we free from sin only in the sense that we are forgiven, or do we actually have freedom from sin – from the power and corruption of it? This lesson explores and answers these kinds of questions from the perspective of *willful disobedience and the Christian*.

Key Verse

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 Jn. 3:9).

Lesson Summary

Undoubtedly the works of sinners will be judged by God. The apostle Paul explains that all sinners, both those who have the knowledge of the law of God and those who do not, will be judged without respect of persons. Sinners who carry out sinful desires through disobedient hearts, will be judged by the righteous judge, Jesus Christ (Ro. 2:11-16). However, our Lord came to free us from sin and its judgment (Jn. 8:36). When we define sin according to John’s writings, we conclude that saints of God do not sin a little every day. John’s primary concern is not our imperfections in comparison with Christ, but rather our willful disobedience to the commandments and will of God (1 Jn. 2:3-4). While we have an advocate with the Father (Jesus Christ) if we sin, nevertheless we must not sin, because sinning is a horror to the child of God (vv. 1-2). In fact, if we are a true Christian, we cannot sin a little every day and be happy, because sinning opposes the knowledge of Christ (1 Jn. 3:2-6). In other words, sinning is not the way of life for the true Christian. How can we ever be called out of sin, if we are hopelessly doomed to sin daily? Again, sinning in the life of the Christian should be understood as willful disobedience, for this is the root of humanity’s sin (Mt. 22:36-40; Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 5:3). According to John, a Christian who walks in willful disobedience is a contradiction (1 Jn. 3:7-9; 5:17-18). Moreover, God will judge willful disobedience among his people (Ep. 5:1-7; Col. 3:5-10). For this reason, when the apostolic church saints sinned, the New Testament writers consistently called for them to repent and turn from their sinful behavior. While any believer is capable of yielding to temptation and sinning against God and one’s neighbor, willfully committing sin is nonetheless inconsistent with the love of God (He. 10:26; Jn. 3:16). As saints of God, we are responsible to live according to the knowledge of the truth. To act in opposition to one’s conviction or to what one personally knows to be right is sin or willful disobedience (Ja. 4:17; Ro. 14:23). From this perspective, each believer must work out his/her own salvation with fear and trembling (Ph. 2:9-13).

Scripture Study

God judges sin – Ro. 2:11-16; Ep. 5:1-7; Col. 3:5-10

Sin is willful disobedience – 1 Jn. 2:1-6; 3:2-9; 5:17-18

Christians live according to knowledge – Ro. 14:23; He. 10:26; Ja. 4:17; Ph. 2:9-13

Conclusion

Clearly, Jesus Christ came into this world to deliver us from the power of sin that produces willful disobedience in the children of wrath. Our freedom from this power of sin (the law of sin) is experienced through sanctification and maintained through a consecrated lifestyle.

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“The Works of the Flesh”

Various words (or phrases) in the New Testament are synonymous with “sin.” These words convey the idea of sin, although they may have differences in meaning in regard to sin. For example, transgression, disobedience, unrighteousness, and iniquity are all descriptive of sin. In Galatians 5:19-21, when the apostle Paul wrote of *the flesh*, he was speaking of the sin-principle, or the law of sin, that gives expression to sinful works of the flesh. In this lesson, we will briefly overview the works of the flesh, as we continue to answer the question, “What is sin?”

Key Verse

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Ga. 5:16).

Lesson Summary

Clearly, the works of the flesh are actions and attitudes of an unholy heart. As saints of God, the apostle Paul admonished us to walk in the Spirit as opposed to walking in the lusts of sinful flesh. Paul listed specific works of the flesh and put these in a certain order according to their similarities. The first group of fleshly works is sexual or sensual transgression: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, and lasciviousness. Where adultery and fornication refer more to the action of sexual sin, uncleanness and lasciviousness refer more to the attitude or spirit behind such wickedness. Adultery and fornication arise from impure, sensual desires. Next, idolatry and witchcraft are interconnected in the Scriptures. In Revelation 9:20, idolatry is linked to the worship of devils. Paul explicitly connected idolatry to the worship of devils (1 Co. 10:14-21). Also, hatred, variance (contentions), emulations (jealousies), and wrath identify ungodly ways of acting or responding in relationship to others. These are relational transgressions in opposition to love and peace one toward another (Ga. 5:22). Moreover, strife, seditions, and heresies are divisive sins: sins that are manipulative and self-serving with political overtones. Next, envy and murder go hand-in-hand. We see this connection in the story of Cain, who for envy slew his brother Abel (Gen. 4:3-5; 1 Jn. 3:12). Finally, drunkenness and revellings are ungodly works without restraint. Because of this, they open the door to many other works of the flesh. Of course, Paul did not give us an exhaustive list, but rather a representative list, saying, “and such like” (Ga. 5:21). When writing to the Romans and the Corinthians, Paul expounded on the works of the flesh, referring to them as unrighteousness (Ro. 1:29-32; 1 Co. 6:9; 1 Jn. 5:17). He also wrote about the works of the flesh in terms of disobedience (Ep. 5:3-6; Col. 3:5-9). In other words, the works of the flesh are clearly actions and attitudes of unrighteousness and willful disobedience to the commandments of God – not mere imperfections in the life of the saint. Fulfilling these ungodly works corrupt the soul and produce death (Ro. 1:32; Ro. 6:23; 8:13).

Scripture Study

Works of the flesh – Ga. 5:19-21

Works of unrighteousness and disobedience – Ro. 1:29-32; 1 Co. 6:9; Ep. 5:3-6; Col. 3:5-9; 1 Jn. 5:17

These will not inherit the kingdom of God – 1 Co. 6:9-10; Ga. 5:21; Ep. 5:5

Conclusion

God’s grace is not permissive regarding the works of the flesh. They are works of wickedness which have no place in the kingdom of God. Therefore, those who do such things will not inherit God’s kingdom (1 Co. 6:9-10; Ga. 5:21; Ep. 5:5). As such, the apostle Paul calls for all saints to walk or live in the Spirit, which is a call to sanctification through the Spirit.

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“The Spirit of Rebellion”

Introduction

The world is filled with lawlessness and disobedience (1 Ti. 1:9-10). The sinful flesh does not want to be restrained by the Spirit of holiness and the standard of the Truth. Through rejecting the Truth and the Spirit of holiness, humans have fashioned God according to their own will, thus exalting themselves rather than serving the Creator (Gen. 1:5; Ro. 1:23-25). Perhaps, no other word better describes the spirit in fallen humanity than “rebellion.” In this lesson, we will examine Satan’s rebellion and its influence in the world today.

Key Verse

“Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen” (Ro. 1:25).

Lesson Summary

In John’s vision, he recorded a dramatic account of Satan’s fall and rebellion against God (Re. 12:3-4, 7-8). Satan and his angels (demons) fought against Michael, the archangel, and his angelic forces (Jude 9). Of course, Satan and his angels lost the battle; they were cast out of heaven into the earth; and they were reserved for judgment (Re. 12:9; 2 Pe. 2:4; Jude 6). Satan is filled with a spirit of rebellion against God. Though he and his angels are reserved for judgment, at the last he will again instigate a final rebellion against the Almighty (Re. 20:7-10). Rebellion is his nature. Satan will pursue rebellion until he is forever cast into the lake of fire (v. 10). Moreover, Jesus called him “a liar, and the father of it” (Jn. 8:44). He is a liar because “there is no truth in him” (v. 44). Through his rebellion against God and his Word from the beginning, Satan became the source of all lies and deception. He is the deceiver of the whole world (Re. 12:9; 20:8, 10). Through deception he leads the world in rebellion against the Truth toward their own destruction (2 Th. 2:8-12). In the Garden of Eden, we see how Satan instilled his rebellion in the human race (Gen. 3:1-6). First, he lied to Eve, saying, “Ye shall not surely die.” He contradicted the commandment of God, thus enticing Eve to question the Truth. In other words, Eve was enticed to consider the possibility that God had not been truthful with her. He planted doubt in her mind. Next, Satan substituted his own words for the words of God (v. 5). He enticed Eve by suggesting that God was keeping something desirable from her. By eating the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she could attain the knowledge of good and evil, and be like God himself. What deception! Sadly, Eve rejected the Truth and believed Satan’s lie. As a result, both Eve and Adam disobeyed the Word of God and rebelled against the Lord (v. 6). Thus, the spirit of rebellion took over the human race.

Scripture Study

Satan’s rebellion – Re. 12:3-4, 7-8; 20:7-10

The father of lies and deception – Jn. 8:44; Re. 12:9; 20:8, 10

Enticing humanity to rebel – 2 Th. 2:8-12; Gen. 3:1-6

Conclusion

The spirit of rebellion against the Truth was the beginning of humanity’s disobedience. Today, Satan continues to entice many to reject the Truth and believe his lies. His work is to pervert the Word of God and to twist the Truth for the destruction of souls (2 Pe. 3:16-18). Thus, we must combat him through proclaiming the Truth.