

Sin

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[0 : 0 0] We will take one verse that we find in part of a verse in Romans 7 to try and bring together the different teaching that we find in these two chapters.

You'll find then our text in verse 13 of Romans chapter 7.

Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid, but sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good, that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

That sin might become, through the commandment, that is, the recognition of the law of God, exceeding sinful.

So, this evening I want to look with you at the reality of sin in a human being.

[1 : 3 6] We read in John's epistle these solemn words. God is light and in him there is no darkness at all.

There is no evil in him. There is no sinfulness in him. He is everything that is the opposite of sin.

He is light. And because he is light, he expects all his creation to be of the same calibre as himself.

Now, when man was created, he was of the same calibre as God.

For a period in the infancy of the human race, God could come down to the environment of man and speak to him face to face.

[3 : 0 1] There was no need of a mediator. There was no need of a mediator. Because there was no sin. We read in Genesis, God walked in the garden in the cool of the day.

And mankind was of the same calibre as God. Another day came when sin entered.

And from the moment sin entered, God went out. God no longer had fellowship with man. And yet, he came seeking man in order to restore the fellowship.

In order to bring man back into his fellowship. When he came to the garden one evening, things had changed.

Instead of rushing out to God to enjoy his fellowship, our first parents hid behind the trees of the garden.

[4 : 1 9] They were on the run from God. Why were they on the run from God? Because they had ceased to be holy. And because they were no longer holy.

They were no longer of the calibre of God. They wanted to get away from him. They were afraid of him. Because he was light.

They were darkness. From that day end to this, the problem is the same. But down through the years, and as the history of mankind has proceeded, and as sin has got deeper and deeper, mankind now, while not knowing that he is not of the calibre of God, has basically, to a great extent, lost the fear of God, that our first parents had in the garden.

And as mankind is prevented from understanding and grasping the revelation of God, there is less and less fear of God, until at last, there is little or of any at all.

And sin has ceased to become sinful. In the scriptures, there are three basic descriptions of sin.

[6 : 17] That which happened to mankind. First of all, we are told in the scriptures that it is a violation of God's law. Now, God's law, strangely enough, we read in Romans, is written in two places.

It's written in two places. It's written in the scriptures, and it's developed in the scriptures. But it's also written in our hearts.

What we call conscience is our responses to the law of God as we know it in our hearts. But again, with willful violation of God's law in the scriptures, so that men won't read it, there's also a violation of God's law in the heart.

So that the man who used to say his first swear, with a little bit of fear, can give a string of balls now without a fear. The lassie, who was afraid of moral sin, or the laddie, after they practice it two or three times, it's no longer sinful.

It gets less and less. So with lying, and stealing, God's holy Sabbath, we may be here this evening.

[7 : 53] And from the cradle, we were brought up to remember this was God's day. The day when we worship him, a special day, a day when we put apart all other things.

And it was in our hearts. And we grew up with it. But then there came a day when we got our freedom. And so, we broke the law.

We knew it to be God's law in the book, but we didn't worry too much because we didn't open the book too much. But we also started breaking it in the heart. And now, it is easy perhaps to go to a dance, or to go to places in God's day, as it is to swear.

Sin has ceased to be sinful. Sin then, is a violation of God's law, first of all.

It's more than that though. Second thing you find in the scriptures about sin is that it's a rebellion of our spirit against God himself. So that we're saying, well I'm not going to obey him if he's there.

[9 : 06] It's not only the things that we do to break the commands of God, it's the spirit that we have in our hearts against God himself who gives the commands.

And like we said to Jesus, we're not going to have this man to rule over us. You see, God will rule over us or God will leave us. That's the second thing about sin then.

We rebel against God himself. And sin, that kind of sin of rebelling against God himself, it's no sinful. We don't feel it.

We just do it. The third thing in the scriptures about sin is basically it's like, it's called missing the mark.

Like taking an arrow and letting it go towards a target. Instead of hitting the target dead centre, we might hit it away out in the perimeter. And what God says is that everything we do, even if we try to do good, we try to hit dead centre, we miss the mark.

[10 : 16] So sin is part and parcel of us. It's a violation of God's law. It's a rebellious spirit against God himself.

It's a missing the mark. But the tragedy of it is, is the more that we do it, the less sinful it becomes. God's law. And so we find that when God deals with a person and brings that person to himself, in one way or another, he brings us to the truth of this text.

And he usually does it by his word or by his law. Paul here is talking perhaps more of the Ten Commandments.

And that's what God uses, his word. Paul tells us that there was a day in his life when he knew the Ten Commandments and he knew all the laws of Moses.

But although he knew them intellectually, he didn't worry about them too much in his heart. In fact, he thought that he kept them pretty well.

[11 : 46] But then the Spirit of God began to work in Paul and he began to see that he didn't keep the law of God.

And so he tried to keep it. And the more he tried to keep it, the more sinful he became. At least that's how he felt. But the fact was, the more he tried to keep it, the more he found out he could keep it.

And when he tried to obey God, he found himself sinning a hundred times more than he was before in his feelings. But the facts were, he was doing all these sins before, but he had never felt them.

He never felt them inside. And when God, the Holy Spirit, began to deal with Paul inside, and the more he tried to keep the commands of God, the more he felt he was sinning.

sin, and then sin to him, he says, became exceeding sinful. Do you know what was happening to him?

[13 : 06] He was just beginning to see sin in the way that God sees it. And he was beginning to feel it. And so, we find it in the scriptures, that when a person becomes a Christian, instead of feeling less sin, they feel more sin.

sin, what are they going to do with it when this experience happens? Well, if you can do your best to stop sinning by keeping God's commands, and the more you keep them, the more you feel that you're sinning, either you go wrong in the head, or you look for another remedy.

And so, the person who feels sin to be exceedingly sinful, who knows that they can't stop sinning, and that's the person who goes to Jesus, and trusts in Christ to forgive their sins.

Now, my friend, I want to look particularly this evening to the implications of this text. I want to mention some things about sin.

What sin brings with it? Now, someone might say, what does sin bring? Well, the first thing that sin brings ultimately is death. And as we said this morning, sin brings spiritual death, it will bring physical death, and then it will bring eternal death.

[15 : 05] And that's God's hell. Hell is a place where a holy God who is light puts people who keep on committing sin and have no intention of being different.

And not only have no intention of being different, but who have no ability to be different. You see, a person goes to Jesus when he finds himself or herself exceeding sinful for help and forgiveness and pardon and strength.

They trust in Jesus to save them from this disease. Because sin brings death. But let me say this, my friend, sin brings fear. I know that we can forget about some of our sins.

We can fight them off. But sin brings fear. Sin itself actually brings fear of being found out. There's many of us in here tonight.

We thought we were going to be found out. If I was going to take a pen tonight and I was going to go up to the wall there and I was going to write all the sins that you wouldn't like anybody else to know, and when I was going to name you in the wall, that would bring fear.

[16 : 32] Sin brings an emptiness. It brings a feeling of guilt ultimately. It brings loss with it. We lose everything. It brings unhappiness.

sin. Because it's the opposite of what God made us to be. Now then, what are we going to do about sin?

You see, we've got a problem. Hall here is speaking as a believer. He's saying, God's law brought about inside me this experience of sin being exceedingly sinful.

sin. But there's believers in church tonight and you've got sin. Does it mean that you're not converted?

No, not necessarily. And so what I want to look at is sin in the believer, believer, in the person who's been brought to the place where they know sin to be sinful, when they're trusting in Christ to forgive them from the sin.

[17 : 55] sin. You're here tonight, perhaps, and you're not a believer. Well, what we've got to deal with just now, first of all, and that's all this sermon refers to you, is the problem of past sin.

What are you going to do? Supposing tonight you could, you can't, but supposing you could, supposing tonight you could change over and live a perfect life from tonight onwards.

Remember, God is light. In him there's no darkness at all. What are you going to do with your past sins, your accumulated guilt, from the time you were a child, till tonight?

God has numbered our sins. And so the first thing that a person does when they begin to feel the exceeding sinfulness of sin is this, what am I going to do about it?

Paul had an idea that if he tried to make himself better, that would be the answer. And so he tried and he found out that the more he tried to make himself better by obeying the law of God, the more sinful he became.

[19 : 23] And instead of having that much we may say of accumulated guilt, it grew and it grew and it grew every day. What do we do with sin that is accumulated, guilt that is our own?

Because the Bible says it only needs one sin, to put us out of God's holy eternity, because he is holy. Past sin then is the first problem.

Now some people try to forget about it. They screw up their minds and their heads and they say, well I'm going to try to be better, I'll forget about it. But the Bible says God doesn't forget about it.

Be sure your sins will find you out. So it's no use forgetting it. Some say, well I'll try to be better, but that doesn't get rid of sin.

Some say, I'll pray, but that doesn't get rid of sin. Sin must be punished as we found this morning. When Jesus was on the cross, he was made sin.

[20 : 39] All the sins of those who trust him were laid upon him, and he was punished for their sins. And so we come to the place that when sin begins to become exceeding sinful, and we want to do something about it, there's nothing we can do about it, except go to Jesus and ask him to clean it.

It's a wonderful word, that, clean. We read in the scriptures, there is something that cleans sin, the blood of Jesus Christ that he shed on the cross.

it cleans it. It's a wonderful feeling, you know, if you've worked in the house, perhaps, or you've been out in the garden, or a farmer out in the farm, or a miner down in the coal, and he comes up and he's dirty, he goes into a lovely hot bath, and all the dirt is washed away, and he's fresh, and he's clean, and he's invigorated.

What a wonderful feeling. You ever see a baby that's just up and mocked up to the eyes? You take the baby and you put it into the bath, you put some powder in the baby and it comes out clean, smelling lovely.

You know, when we get forgiven by God, we're as clean as a baby, coming out of a bath, we're like the person who's dirty, having all the muck put away, we start fresh, clean.

[22 : 16] And only as we trust in Jesus and his blood to clean us can we get rid of our past sin. It's the only way. If not, from now until the grave, we'll still keep on accumulating it, and for every time we sin, we'll meet its punishment yet.

So if you're here in church this evening, and you've got the sin of a lifetime, there's only one way you can get rid of it, it's by coming to the cross, it's by saying to Jesus, Jesus be my saviour and wash it away in the blood that you shed.

It's the only way my friends. And he does that. Past sin is forgiven. sin. You are now saved by Jesus.

But there's someone in church in England who say, yes I'm saved by Jesus. But you know, I've got something inside me that's still producing sin.

And sin is still exceeding sinful. Well let me say this, that once we get this consciousness of sin being exceeding sinful, that's one of God's greatest gifts.

[23 : 42] Because there may be in church tonight a person who's a believer and you professed Christ maybe ten years or twenty or thirty years ago. You professed Christ when you went to him and you felt sin to be exceeding sinful.

And you felt its vileness. And you're sitting in church tonight and you don't feel it to be exceedingly sinful. You know that it's sinful in your head. You know that it's evil in your head.

And there are certain sins that you see other people do that you don't like. But sin as a rotten disease in yourself is not quite so exceeding sinful as it once was.

And that tells me that you're a backslider. And I'm a backslider. For in the measure that we see sin to be exceeding sinful, in that measure we deal with it when we see it.

But not to be ultimately too discouraged. In the scriptures the apostle Paul tells us that when a person is forgiven for all their sins, past, present and future, at the moment of their forgiveness only one thing happens apart from forgiveness.

[25 : 12] Romans chapter 6 says this that we are loosed from the dominant power of sin. Up until the moment that we are brought to Christ, sin rules over us.

After we're brought to Christ, sin dwells in us, but is not the absolute king.

In other words, when sin came to us as unbelievers, we obeyed it willingly and lovingly and implicitly. It ruled us, says God. But after we came to Christ and saw sin to be exceeding sinful and what it was against God, it lost its ruling power, but it never lost its attacking power, and it never lost its indwelling power.

And so the apostle says in verse 24 and in 23 and in 21, listen, he says, I find then a law when I would do good, evil is present with me.

He didn't say evil was always conquering him. He said it was present and it was attacking him. He also said, I delight in the law of God after the inward man.

[26 : 46] But he says, O wretched man that I am, who will save me from this body of death? You see, a believer after he or she has their sin forgiven, past, present, and future, so that they need no longer worry about the consequences of sin, do have to be concerned about the reality of sin that dwells inside them.

They've got to be concerned about it. And so we read that we still have indwelling sin, and the Bible calls it, it's in the flesh, it's called the flesh.

Alright then, now then, the believer has been pardoned for past sin, he has this indwelling sin, which is attacking, not drooling, and when he came to Christ, Christ did one other thing, he put within him his own spirit, to enable the believer to fight against sin.

Now, can I say this to you, my friends? The Holy Spirit never came into a human body, he never came into a Christian to fight sin, he came into the Christian to help the Christian to fight sin, never forget that, and the moment that the child of God stops fighting, the spirit of God stops helping, he helpeth our infirmities, let's not forget that, sin.

And so we come now, as we develop as Christians, to the problem of known sin, the sin that we know about, well first of all we know about the ten commandments, that we know we have to do certain things, six of them, we also know that four of them we have to do, and so let me say you come to the six commandments that we are not allowed to do, we are not allowed to commit adultery, so adultery and all forms of filthy communication, all smutty things, all vile things, let it not be once named among you that are saints, if we have a friend who tells smutty jokes, we don't sit and listen to them, we just gently drift away if they won't stop, and they'll soon stop when they know that we're not listening, thou shalt not kill, therefore we will not brutalise anybody, but the word of

[29 : 46] God also says you will not kill yourself, so if we've got habits that will produce death in us, we will seek by the grace of God to stop those habits, when it comes to remember the Lord's day to keep it holy, it links to not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together in fellowship, fellowship, you can't keep the Lord's day holy without fellowship, and so the people of God will seek as much fellowship on the Lord's day in the house of God and out of it, and with God himself as they can, and if there's any ways of forms of breaking God's day, they will not share in it, people say to me, some close, there's nothing wrong with me going home and turning on the television in God's day, well my friends, if you think that is keeping the Lord's day, you're living in a fool's paradise, you will neither break

God's day yourself, nor enjoy those who are breaking it, and so we have the sins that we know, the ten commandments, but then when we go into the New Testament, we get a lot more, we get the Sermon on the Mount, you read the Sermon on the Mount, and then in the New Testament we get a lot of application of different things, and so we find out that the range that we've got to be aware of gets bigger and bigger, now if there's anything in that range that we know to be sin and we keep on doing it, two things will happen, one, for a period, we will feel exceedingly sinful, then that will go away as it went away in the garden, and we will do it, but then another thing will happen to us, we'll not be happy doing it, and we will drift away from

God, because God will stop having fellowship with us, we'll keep on coming to church, we'll keep on maybe having family worship, we'll keep on even coming to the prayer meeting, although we won't enjoy these things, and because there is some known sin in our lives that we're not willing to forgo, and ultimately known sin, if persisted in, will drag us back, and will prove to us, by our reluctance to give it up, that we don't belong to Christ at all, and that our profession was false.

You see, known sin is a reality, even in the lives of the people of God. It's a frightening thing.

But there's a difference between known sin now, and spontaneous sin. Known sin is the sin that you know what it is, and you're determined to keep on doing it.

[33 : 19] What's spontaneous sin? Well, spontaneous sin may be put like this. It's an eruption of the flesh which you regret.

Supposing somebody says something to you, and it annoys you, and you flash back sharply, get into a row. sin will.

You can sin spontaneously, and then you can regret it. What do you do then? You confess it, and say you're sorry.

You might look at somebody, if you're that way inclined, and they've got something new in their house, and you feel coming into you a spirit of envy. It's in. What do you do with it?

Keep on being envious? Well, if you do, it becomes known sin. You say to God, look, I've had an envious thought, I'm sorry, clean me, and give me a new start.

- [34 : 26] So you start fresh, you don't need to worry. Spontaneous sin is the sin that erupts and it gets the better of you, even before you know what you're doing.
- Now, we're all in the grip of that. And the Bible says, he that says he's no sin, the truth is no in him. And it says, if any man sin, we have an advocate with a father.
- You see, the child of God is not sinless. He is a person whom sin has become exceedingly sinful, and it no longer rules like it once did, but it's always trying to regain the throne again.
- sin. And sometimes the believer is guilty of spontaneous sin. And I can tell you this, you'll get a man of God, and you may have this experience.
- You go away into the closet to be alone with God, and you find that you're finding the face of God. You've put away every sin that you know you're walking with God, and then you come out, and something happens within ten minutes, and you're depressed.
- [35 : 54] You've given in again, but the child of God will get up, and keep on fighting. You see, there's spontaneous sin.
- sin. The person who sulks in sin, and keeps on in the antagonism of sin, that person is revealing that they no longer see the exceeding sinfulness of it.
- Therefore, they're not living near God, no matter how their outward life is looking. So, there's spontaneous sin. Now, there's another kind of sin for those who are determined to go on with God, and I'm going to call it reflective sin.
- What's reflective sin? Well, it's sin that you don't see when you do it, and yet when you go in alone with God, he brings it back to your mind and shows you where you've sinned.
- It could be in the tone that you used, maybe in the home. It could be that you did something at work which let the Lord down.
- [37 : 13] it could be when you come home to work, you found it, you didn't put in as good a day's work as you should, and on reflecting of it, and reflecting on the day, God shows you this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this, and this.
- Things that you didn't do that you should have done, and things that you shouldn't have done that you did, and you never saw them, and you never felt them when you did them, but go alone with God, my friends, and the person who knows sin to be exceeding sinful will learn so much more in the closet than they did outside.
- And God teaches the lessons of sin so that we can deal with them and put it away, so that other people can see goodness appearing in our living.
- That's reflected sin. Sometimes people wonder about forgotten sin.
- There's a lady who came to someone I know very well recently, after 30 years, to apologise.
- [38 : 43] An old lady with tears in her eyes, almost on the verge of the grave, apologising to a younger person for the ill that they did, forgotten sin.
- God remembers them and brings them to our memory. and will demand that we do something about them. And then I'm afraid from the scriptures, there is something that I want to call unrecognised sin.
- And that's in all of us. Sin that we don't recognise that's there. it's recognised recognised by God, it's recognised by others and it's not recognised by ourselves.
- So that no man can say, no matter how much they learn or how far on they go with God, that they do not sin.
- sin. Now that's some of the teaching of the scriptures with regard to sin in a believer's life.

[40 : 04] Past sin, yes, we've got to get it dealt with by Christ. Now what does the believer do? Some believers often wonder when they're young, what do they do?

They know that when they came to Christ their past and their present and their future sin is all taken care of at the cross.

What do they do then with the sin that they commit afterwards if it's all taken away with at the cross? If all your sin is taken away with at the cross, what about the sins that you do now?

Now some people in Romans give a fearful answer to that. They said, let us sin that the grace of God may abound.

They said, since the cross covers all our sins, it doesn't matter what we do, we're going to get saved at the end. And Paul listens to that with horror and he says, God forbid.

[41 : 13] How can you who have been loosed from sin keep on living under its control? Now God has ordained that what he has done in Christ be the undergirding of our faith so that we don't go into despair care.

And so that we don't have any personal merit. But sin in our experience has this when we do it, it cuts us off from fellowship with God.

Even although it's been taken care of at the cross, although we can do nothing to save ourselves, it cuts us off from fellowship with God. It grieves the Holy Spirit away.

It makes the believer unhappy. It makes him afraid. You see, sin has become exceeding sinful through the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart.

sin. And the only way a heart can be happy is when the sin problem is dealt with up to date. And so when we turned to John's gospel, John's epistle, rather, you'll remember that he was talking to believers.

[42 : 45] And when he was talking to believers, he dealt with the problem of believers sins. And he says, well, he didn't want them to commit to the stupid thought, or to think the stupid thought that because they were believers they had no sin.

He says, we start with God and we say, God is the only one without sin. He is light and him is no darkness at all. He's the only one. And then he says, this is the message that we declare unto you that God is light.

That's the basic message. That's why we've sinned against him. And then he says, if we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, if we say that we've got fellowship with his holy God and are keeping on committing sins, and sin is not exceeding sinful, he says, you're nothing but a pack of liars.

Are you a liar, my friend? Are you one of the pack of liars that John is speaking about here? If we say we've got fellowship with him by our profession and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.

Now look at the second verse that says here, that if we walk in the light, according to God's word, knowing the exceeding sinfulness of sin, if we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowshipped one another and what happens?

[44 : 20] The blood of Jesus Christ, God's son, goes on cleansing us from all sin. Whenever sin is seen and done and confessed and forsaken, we can know it's cleansed.

And our fellowship with God is renewed. He says if we say we've no sin, we deceive ourselves, the truth is not in us. He's not trying to make believers think that they've got no sin.

What he's always doing is making believers see where their sin is and tells them how to get rid of it. If we confess our sins, he's faithful and just to forgive us them and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

sin. And so the believer is a person who sees sin to be exceedingly sinful, who feels it to be sinful.

A believer is a person who looks at his past sin and sees it nailed to Jesus on the cross. And he knows that the very sins that he's committing now has nailed Jesus to the cross.

[45 : 38] but these very sins that he's committing now, he's committed against the God and Saviour who's on the cross. And because he wants fellowship with his God, because sin is exceeding sinful, because he's afraid of it, he seeks by the grace of God to overcome it, wherever it is.

Show me a person who's quite content to stay in sin and I'll show you a person who is not walking with God, either a backslider or a person without God.

And so we thank God for this one wonderful mark, when he deals with you and me and deals with us in salvation, him.

He makes sin exceeding sinful. And the more we walk on with God, he keeps it exceeding sinful.

May God help us to know whether we're his children or not. And if we've got this experience, help us to be thankful. sinful. And if we haven't got it, may God make us fearful because God is light.

[47 : 09] In him is no darkness at all. And those who sin against him will die and be banished from his presence.

and in hell the company will be sinners of all kinds forever, shall we pray.

O God, we thank thee that thou hast told us in thy word, that we've all got accumulated sin and guilt, that must be either forgiven or which we must be punished for.

May we come to Jesus for forgiveness, for our violation of thy laws, our rebellion against thee thyself and our missing mark.

May we come to the Lord Jesus for pardon. And then realizing that we have a body of sin and death inside us, a body of corruption that still vomits up sin, although not the ruling power, the attacking power.

[48 : 50] may we depend wholly upon the spirit of Jesus to strengthen us, to fight it.

We thank thee that for thy Lord thou dost make them to see sin exceeding sinful. May we be afraid of known sin, put it away.

may we be thankful that even with spontaneous sin, it must be put away immediately although forgiven.

And then when we reflect on sin and find ourselves to be so sinful when we thought we were perhaps reasonably good, we thank thee for that self-knowledge.

And for the areas of sin that we don't see that thou dost see and others see, help us Lord, to detect them.

[49 : 52] And bless us tonight in all that we've heard, for Jesus sake. Amen.