Section: Doctrine of Sin (Hamartiology)

Lesson 31: Wednesday, May 10, 2023

Q37. What happened to mankind because of sin?

Teacher: Justin Ader

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Greeting:**

Good evening! I am so delighted to be here with you all on this day that the Lord has made. I am thankful for our catechism question and answer tonight as we continue on in Part 4 of the Word of Truth Catechism, the Doctrine of Sin, also known as Hamartiology. If you are new or visiting and we have not met, my name is Justin Ader. I am the Youth Director and a member of the teaching team here at Disciples Church. These past few weeks we have looked at the definition of sin, we looked at the sin of idolatry, we looked at how Adam and Eve sinned, and we got an understanding of why Adam’s sin affects all mankind. For the next two weeks we get to look at what happened to both mankind and the rest of creation because of sin. Our focus tonight will be solely on question 37, which asks, what happened to mankind because of sin? So, let’s pray for the Spirit to illuminate these truths to us so that we may know these things rightly, and then we will dive in. Pray with me.

**Introduction:**

In the modern English of the historic 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith Chapter 6 speaks of the fall of man, of sin, and of the punishment thereof. Regarding the fall of mankind, it says: “God created humans upright and perfect, and he gave them a righteous law that would have resulted in life if they had kept it, but threatened death if they broke it. Genesis 2:16-17 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” However, they did not remain in this honored position for long. Satan used the subtlety of the serpent to trick Eve, who then seduced Adam. Without any compulsion, Adam willfully disobeyed the law written in his heart (of their creation) and God’s command by eating the forbidden fruit. Genesis 3:12-13 12 The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” God was pleased, according to his wise and holy counsel, to permit this because he had planned to use Adam’s sin for his own glory.”

Sin is not a topic that people generally enjoy talking about. However, by being in the world (workplace, school, grocery store, etc), or even before you were given saving faith, you may have noticed that people do enjoy talking about sinful things. However, they don’t like talking about sin in such a way as to drag it into the light to be exposed. The reason for this is because sin hates the light and loves the darkness. We see this in Scripture.

John 3:19-20 19 And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed.

Unfortunately many people have a small view of sin and a big view of self. Church, this can’t be the case for the Christian. Charles Spurgeon famously said that those who think lightly of sin think lightly of the Savior. I think the reason for this small view of sin and big view of self has to do with the fact that a lot of modern day preachers are not using, or rightly using, God’s authoritative Word to preach from. Instead, they use their own ideas and words. We are told in God’s Word that all Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. Not only that, but the Word of God transforms our minds. It is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. We cannot put our Bibles down and do it our way. We are desperate for God. He is perfect and righteous, we are not.

An edifying study called, “The Gospel-Centered Life” says this: As I read the Bible, experience the Holy Spirit’s conviction, and live in community with other people, the extent of God’s greatness and the extent of my sin become increasingly clear and vivid. It is not that God is becoming more holy or that I am becoming more sinful. But my awareness of both is growing. I am increasingly seeing God as He actually is (holy) and myself as I actually am (wicked). As my understanding of my sin and of God’s holiness grows, something else also grows: my appreciation and love for Jesus.

So, because we love Jesus as His beloved disciples, we do not want to be dismissive or play light with the sin that cost Him so much. Our goal should be to honor Christ by growing in our hatred of sin in general, and our own sin, and being increasingly aware of constant attempts to manifest itself in our fallen flesh. Before we study our question and answer tonight, I want to remind us all of question 33 that Pastor Joshua taught a few weeks ago. This teaches us what sin is exactly:

Q33. What is sin? Sin is disobeying God; sin is any disobedience in heart or deed to God’s perfect law and commands.

It is important for us to remember that the basis of our sin is our disobedience in heart or deed to God’s perfect law. It is not honoring Him as we should. It’s making more of His creation than of Him or misusing His creation. It is a disregard for God and His design for us as His creation. Our answer to what happened to mankind because of sin starts with the sin of Adam that I already unpacked, and the fact that we all inherit his guilt and are born with a sinful nature. With that, let’s look at our question and answer for tonight.

**Q37. What happened to mankind because of sin?**

After the sin of Adam, all people are guilty: born sinful by nature, enslaved to sin, and practice sin willingly and continually; therefore, all are due the just penalty of God’s perfect wrath.

I am going to break our answer down by expositing each point said in it, then end our time by sharing the good news of God’s grace and power to redeem undeserving sinners to eternal life. Let’s start with:

1. **Born Sinful By Nature**

One consequence that happened to mankind because of sin was that all of mankind after Adam was, and is, born sinful by nature. We call this original sin and/or inherited sin.

In the glossary of your Word of Truth Catechism book you will find many terms and definitions. I’d encourage you to become familiar with these as they are very helpful when studying theology. In the glossary we find the term Original Sin and the definition. It defines Original Sin this way:

The inherited guilt and corruption of man’s nature as a direct result of Adam’s sin. Because of God’s system of headship, when Adam sinned, in some sense, all of mankind sinned with him; therefore, Adam’s guilt is every person’s guilt. In addition to the legal guilt that God imputes to each person, everyone also inherits a sinful nature and the other consequences brought on because of Adam’s sin.

What this means is that we all (every person ever born of man and woman) are conceived in our mother’s womb with a sinful nature as a result of Adam’s sin. Again, in our mother’s belly, before we are even born, we are guilty and corrupted because of Adam’s sin.

John Calvin said, “Original sin, therefore, seems to be a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God’s wrath, then also brings forth in us those works which Scripture calls “works of the flesh.” We will get into the works of the flesh later.

When Adam sinned, his inner nature was transformed by his sin of rebellion, bringing to him spiritual death and depravity which would be passed on to all who came of man and woman after him. We are going to talk about spiritual death and depravity in my next point so that we have a good grasp of these terms. So, just as we inherit genetic or physical characteristics from our biological parents (like our hair color, eye color, and so on), we inherit our sinful natures from our first parents, Adam and Eve. Scripture informs us that sin came to us all from Adam.

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

Now, when we say the term Original Sin, we are not referring to Adam’s first sin, but to the guilt and inclination to sin with which we are conceived. It is “original” in that it comes from Adam, and it is also original in that we have it from the beginning of our existence as persons, but it is our guilt and brokenness, not Adam’s, that is meant.

You may or may not have heard us use the term Federal Headship last week during Pastor Steve’s teaching. This term helps explain why our sin nature is inherited from Adam, so if you missed it, hear it tonight. Here is the Federal Headship of Adam:

God chose Adam as the Federal Head (representative) of all mankind. Because Adam failed to obey God’s commands perfectly, all those he represented receive the results of his disobedience. Given God’s perfect wisdom, we can never argue that Adam was a poor choice to represent us. God’s choice of Adam as the first Federal Head was an infallible (perfect) choice; Adam represented us accurately. If we are to be reconciled to God, we need a second and final Federal Head to redeem and represent us. For the salvation of the elect, God ordained Jesus as the second and final Federal Head.

So, listen closely. You are either in Adam (spiritually dead) and he is your Federal Head, or you are in Christ (spiritually alive) and He is your Federal Head.

Because of Adam, all are imputed a sinful nature and are guilty before the Holy God. But, if you belong to Jesus, you are imputed with His righteousness and therefore are justified before the Holy God. Both of these are a result of imputation. Imputation is when something not of your own is credited (accounted) to you. Again, Adam’s guilt was imputed to all persons. The sin of the elect was imputed to Jesus at the cross, and Jesus’ perfect righteousness is imputed to the elect at conversion. This is the Apostle Paul’s point in:

Romans 5:19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

We all in this room were born sinful by nature, and for those of you who might be with child still in the womb, they too are sinful by nature. Scripture affirms our sinful nature in Psalm 51 when King David lamented the reality of our condition in our fallen nature after he had sinned with Bathsheba.

Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. What King David is saying here is that he was sinful at birth, sinful from the time his mother conceived him.

This is also seen in Psalm 58:3 (NIV) Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward, spreading lies.

Again, through Adam the inherent inclination to sin entered the human race, and human beings became sinners by nature. The original sin that we are all born with manifests itself throughout our lives in actual sins that we commit. Those sins are the actions, the thoughts, and the feelings that we have which violate God’s moral law.

Since we are all born sinful by nature, it is our nature to sin as sinners, just as it is a fish’s nature to swim, or a lion’s nature to hunt. Now, I am sure that many of us in this room could attest to the fact that we are indeed sinners, and that we have been since conception. But, when you look at your newborn baby sleeping peacefully in his/her crib, it can be hard sometimes to think of them as sinners. In fact, many in the world tell us that babies are innocent. I’ve heard this argument from many, including family. Some hold to this so tightly that it becomes an idol. One argument from the world is that babies are born entirely innocent and that they only become sinners after having committed sins through learning disobedience from others. C.H. Spurgeon said this, and I agree with him:

“Any man who declares children to be born perfect never was a father. Your child without evil? You without eyes, you mean!”

Tedd Tripp in his book, Shepherding a Child’s Heart, said this:

“Even a child in the womb and coming from the womb is wayward and sinful. We often are taught that man becomes a sinner when he sins. The Bible teaches that man sins because he is a sinner. Your children are never morally neutral, not even from the womb.”

Pastor Joshua said: “Children are a wonderful gift from God with great dignity and value as image bearers of God and it is good for us to do everything we can to protect them from exposure to the sin in the world around them—the particular sins they are innocent of having committed when they first enter the world. But we would be damning our children to an eternity in hell if we ever led them to believe that their ability to refrain from committing the list of sins that they had not yet personally committed as newborn babies would keep them unstained from the corruption of sin.”

My wife and I have 5 children, 4 girls and 1 boy. I have no doubt that babies are naturally sinful, as I have witnessed their nature rightly. The manipulation, the tantrums, and so on. Now, sometimes we might say he/she is a good kid. Or, this child of mine didn’t act out the way this child did and so forth. This is because there are some children who seem to be more or less inclined to embrace the fullness of their sin nature, but the fact still remains, they are not innocent.

Alright, here’s a random question for you. Who likes black widows? Well, in my profession I deal with a lot of black widows. They live in the pump houses that cover our water wells. In the summertime they are in every corner and hiding all over. On the web, you usually see the big mama black widow, an egg sack filled with baby black widows and a dead dad that mama has consumed. Now, black widows are dangerous, the most venomous spider in North America. Their venom is 15 times stronger than rattlesnake venom. At every pump house, they are there, and I kill them with spray or other means because they are dangerous. Am I gonna leave the poor innocent babies in the egg sack to come out and see if they will be good black widows and not bite anyone? No way! They cannot choose their nature. They cannot choose to be something other than a dangerous black widow. The same goes for us, we cannot choose in the womb to be sinless. Our nature is that of a sinner.

God makes this point in:

Jeremiah 13:23 (NLT) Can an Ethiopian change the color of his skin? Can a leopard take away its spots? Neither can you start doing good, for you have always done evil.

The point that God makes here is that sinners cannot change their sinful natures. Only He can change our wicked hearts. Because we are born sinful by nature, we are only desiring sin with no way to change our desires because we cannot change our own hearts. This means that we are enslaved to sin. This is the second thing to happen to mankind because of sin, known theologically as the doctrine of Total Depravity.

1. **Enslaved to Sin**

In your catechism book you have the definition for this term in the glossary. It is in your handout notes as well. This is the definition of Total Depravity:

As a result of Adam’s sin, every person born of both man and woman has inherited a sin nature and is utterly dependent on saving grace exerted by God for a new nature and salvation. Because of the fall, every part of natural man has been corrupted by sin: his mind, will, emotions, and flesh. Sin affects the whole person; all people sin because they are sinners by nature. All men are conceived in sin, dead in sin, slaves to sin, and deserving of God’s wrath. Total depravity does not mean that man is without a conscience or any sense of right or wrong, nor does it mean that man is as wicked or sinful as he could be. Total depravity recognizes the Bible teaches that even the apparent “good” things unregenerate man does are ruined by sin, because they are not done out of faith in Jesus for the glory of God.

A simple way to think of total depravity is being spiritually dead. To remind you again, man does not become spiritually dead because he sins. He is spiritually dead because he is sinful by nature. Every person conceived of man and woman is physically alive in the womb, but at the same time, they are spiritually dead. The reason that the word “total” is in the phrase total depravity is because our sin nature affects the entire person.

R.C. Sproul said: “The body, the mind, the will, the spirit—indeed, the whole person—have been infected by the power of sin.”

Total Depravity recognizes that every part of us is sinful. There is nothing pure within us. Like Sproul said, everything in us is affected by sin in our spiritually dead state.

Our bodies: How they deteriorate over time, health problems, and the sin we commit with our bodies. 1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

Our minds: How we think, our emotions, and the sinful thoughts that play out in our minds. Romans 8:7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.

Our wills: They are in bondage to sin and carry out the desires of the body and mind. Ephesians 2:3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

Our spirit: We desire sin and enjoy it in our depravity. Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Every part of man—his mind, will, emotions and flesh—have been corrupted by sin. If you help someone who’s weak or aged put their groceries in the trunk because you want them to acknowledge your good deed or give you a little cash and a pat on the back, then your righteous acts apart from Christ are like filthy rags before the Holy God. It’s not the act that makes it a righteous one, it's the desire or motivation behind it. Are you doing this good deed to bring honor and glory to God by obeying His commandment to love your neighbor, or are you doing it out of selfishness for the praise of man?

Isaiah 64:6b and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. This isn’t talking about the oily rag in the garage, no, it’s talking about foul smelling bloody rags. That is the Hebrew meaning of the word used here for polluted and it was most often used to refer to menstrual rags. Those are what your best deeds are in your sin apart from Christ. Really awful.

Not far after the fall of Adam was the wickedness of mankind told to us in Genesis as God evaluated man in his total depravity.

Genesis 6:5 The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

The problem with mankind is that we tend to fall into the trap of thinking that there is good in man and that not all men are bad or evil. For me personally, I hear it the most at funerals when people get up to speak. “Jimmy was a good person. Everyone loved him. He is having a party in Heaven right now and looking down on us.” I’ve shared this before in regard to my stepdad who passed away in 2017. He was not a professing Christian while he was alive. According to his brother, he verbally rejected Jesus at one point. Now, I do not pretend to know the hearts of men, only God does, so it’s always possible that he repented before he took his last breath. However, what I heard people saying was that he was a good man, and they grieved the fact that he was taken so soon, and even called it unjust because of his goodness. As a Christian, I wept and mourned with them, but shared the gospel with them. As I thought about their statements of his goodness, I thought to myself, by what standard? The only standard I knew of was that of God’s word, which taught me of God’s perfect holiness and the depth of mankind’s sin. The world determines the goodness of someone based on other fallen men and women. It is a horizontal outlook. However, the Bible teaches us that no one is good except God alone. Not only is God good, but He is the source of all good. The Bible teaches us that we have fallen short of the glory of God, and that no one seeks for God. Even if you belong to Christ, you are not good on your own merits, but on Christ’s alone. It is Christ in you that is good. In our flesh we like to look at others and their mess of sin to puff ourselves up with pride and determine just how good we think we are doing. Pastor Joshua said 4 years ago that it becomes a contest of who has the prettiest pile of garbage with the least amount of maggots crawling all over it. The critical error in this line of thinking is that man becomes the ultimate determiner and standard of what is good.

God is holy, and he requires us to be holy. That is the standard. We are to look vertical, not horizontal. We must not look at each other to determine how well we are doing. We must look to God and His word as the ultimate standard. Brothers and sisters, we need to not miss this important truth when it comes to our dealings with those around us. Everyone is desperate for the gospel of Jesus Christ. It doesn’t matter how good they appear to be, if they don’t belong to Jesus then they are enslaved to sin. They are dead corpses rotting at the bottom of the sea. They aren’t floundering around in the sea waiting for a life raft. They are spiritually dead and in desperate need of Jesus to give them new life in Him. False teachers today are promoting the goodness of mankind and saying things like God loves everyone just the way they are. That is why there are so many false churches that accept people in their sin, ignoring their sin and calling them brother or sister. It doesn’t matter if you have repented, you don’t need to. Or maybe they appear very pious and seem very religious like the Pharisees. They look generous, serve others, say prayers and fast, but inside there has been no true change of heart. Their motivation is not to honor God, but to boast in self. In this way, it can appear that someone may be seeking God. But if they are not saved by God, then they do not seek Him for who He is. Apart from regeneration by God the Holy Spirit, no one wants God for God. They want Him only for what He can give them unto another end. They seek Him as if He is their genie in a bottle that can grant them wishes, but as soon as life doesn’t go the way they had prayed for, they’re out. Why? Because they are enslaved to sin which is separation and disobedience to God and His commands. Now, let me ask, can society function in ways that appear good if they are totally depraved—enslaved to sin? Yes, they can. But if it is not to truly honor God and glorify His name, then it is sin. Again, their righteous deeds apart from Christ are as good as filthy menstrual rags.

The apostle Paul tells us that all of mankind, apart from Christ, is dead in sin. We see this in his letter to the church in Corinth and to the church in Ephesus.

1 Corinthians 2:14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. A natural person, one who is spiritually dead, cannot and will not accept the things of the Spirit of God.

Now, one of the things we need to understand is that human beings are not as bad as they could be. The natural person does have a conscience (the law written on the heart) and other influences that help govern or restrain their decisions. The constraints of civil law, the expectations of family and society, and the conviction of the natural human conscience all provide restraining influences on the sinful tendencies in our hearts. There is no measure of true sanctification that helps an unregenerate person, so they are left to the best that their circumstances and upbringing and natural mind and heart can produce.

This is why we still train, discipline and shape our children even before they make an outward profession of faith in Christ. We shouldn’t be stagnant in the upbringing of our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord hoping that one day God will save them and then do it. No, God says that we are to teach our children His commands and raise them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Again, this is only speaking of the horizontal. The vertical rightness of one's actions or thoughts are all depraved until regeneration.

By God's grace, some people have done much good in the areas of education, the development of civilization, medical, scientific, and technological progress - the development of beauty and skill in the arts, the development of just laws, and general acts of human benevolence and kindness to others. While these advances and deeds have great horizontal impact and help, they all fall short of meeting the highest standard of God’s holy perfection.

Paul says in Romans 8:7-8 For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

The "mind set on the flesh" is the mind of mankind apart from the indwelling Spirit of God. We see this in the very next verse: "You are not in the flesh, you are in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God really dwells in you," Romans 8:9. So a natural person has a mindset that does not and cannot submit to God. Mankind cannot reform themself.

Ephesians 2:1 says that we Christians were all once "dead in trespasses and sins." The point of deadness is that we were incapable of any life with God. Our hearts were blind and incapable of seeing the glory of God in Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4-6). Moreover, in terms of bearing fruit for God's kingdom and doing what pleases him, Jesus says, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Most simply put, an unregenerate person's actions do not proceed from faith in God. And Hebrews 11 tells us: "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11:6).

When I was saved in my mid-20s, I thought that I had made the decision to choose God. That is in fact what many people are taught today. That mankind has the ability, and the free will, to choose God and believe in Jesus. But the truth of Scripture reveals to us that we are unable to choose God. We call this human inability. This definition is in your glossary as well. It states:

Human Inability: In and of oneself, a person can do nothing that honors God and has no will that longs to trust in Jesus. After Adam, all of mankind are born spiritually dead sinners; each person continues in sin, is unable to do anything that genuinely seeks for or glorifies God, and deserves only God’s righteous wrath.

Jesus Himself tells us in John’s gospel that we are slaves to sin.

John 8:34 Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. Who are those that practice sin? All unregenerate people. We must understand that because of sin, man CANNOT free himself from sin. His sinfulness stems from his desire to sin and as long as he is a sinner he will never desire to be free from it. So why do some people reject the doctrine of total depravity? First, it presents a low view of mankind. Human nature loves to be coddled. It loves to be encouraged. Men and women love to be told of their self-worth, self-importance, and innate goodness. Total depravity destroys all of that. Instead of showing us as deserving and worthy of God’s grace, it actually shows us that we are deserving of God’s wrath. Mankind does not like that. Second, it grates against human experience. This goes back to what we learned with the good we see people do like drilling wells to get water to people that are without clean water.

Again, total depravity does not mean that people never do “good” from our perspective. It’s good to drill water wells in Africa. But none of these things constitute righteousness because from the heart of an unbeliever none of them proceed from faith.

The 1689 Baptist Confession says: After the fall into sin, humanity lost the ability to choose anything good related to salvation. In their natural state, they are completely hostile to everything good and dead in sin. By their own power, they are unable to convert themselves or prepare themselves for conversion.

I like this quote from R.C. Sproul: “The unregenerate person is not inclined to obey God. He has no love for God that stirs his will to choose God. He could choose the things of God *if he wanted them,* but he does not want them. Our wills are such that we cannot freely choose what we have no desire to choose. The fundamental loss of desire for God is the heart of original sin. The lack of desire for the things of God renders us morally unable to choose the good.”

Apart from God, we cannot choose the good, instead we…

1. **Practice Sin Willingly and Continually**

After the sin of Adam, all people practice sin willingly and continually. Even with an inherited sinful nature, and not having a will, motive, or ability to do anything that pleases or worships God, do we still make real choices? The answer is absolutely. All people make choices every day. These choices are in accordance with God’s sovereign plan, His will of decree, and they are genuine from within each person. We see in Scripture that mankind makes choices:

Proverbs 16:1 The plans of the heart belong to man…

Proverbs 16:9 The heart of man plans his way…

Proverbs 19:21 Many are the plans in the mind of a man…

James 1:14 each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

Our choices are determined by our desires—by our will. We exercise them freely based on our desire. To put it simply: If you are not a believer, your will (desire) is to practice sin. If you are a believer, your will (desire) is to love and obey God.

Because of sin, man is born into a condition in which his will (desire) is to sin. This is the governing attribute of fallen man after the sin of Adam, that he is a sinner.

If you are still struggling with this understanding of free will, or with the idea that our wills are limited, consider what scripture has to say about God. God’s nature, His character, His will and His desires are all governed by God. He is who He is and cannot be anything else. In other words, God is not free (in the sense we are describing) to be something other than God. In fact, as we have studied the attributes of God, we have learned that we are not even able to know God rightly without thinking of Him in terms of what He is not. God does not change, God does not lie, etc. In other words, even God is not “free” to do things that are not in accordance with His nature. And that is what we must understand about the nature of fallen man. Man's restricted will has nothing to do with his freedom of choice, but with the corruption of his nature.

Now, if you belong to Jesus and have been saved, then hear Paul’s words in:

Romans 6:17-18 But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. It is this simple, either you are a slave to sin, or you are a slave to Christ. Now, does this mean that the Christian never sins again after being saved? No, God has ordained that Christians will still fight sin in this life. The difference between the unbeliever and believer is that the believer does not love sin. Their sin is made visible by the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and they repent of it. Brothers and sisters, we are still affected by sin, but we are NO longer enslaved to it. It has no hold on us any longer, praise God! Unlike the unbeliever, a true Christian will not make a practice of sinning.

1 John 3:4-9 4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. 8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. 9 No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

Earlier in the lesson, you heard me quote John Calvin and I told you that we would get into the “works of the flesh.” So, let’s look at ways that mankind practices sin willingly and continually apart from Christ.

We see many works of the flesh all throughout the New Testament. But I want to focus specifically on the apostle Paul’s list of works of the flesh to the church in Galatia.

Galatians 5:19-21 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality (this encompasses adultery, fornication, homosexuality, incest, and more), impurity (this is uncleanness, morally impure, and more), sensuality (this is unbridled lust, excess indulgence in sensual pleasures), 20 idolatry (worship of false gods, excessive attachment to anything other than God), sorcery (witchcraft, magic and drugs [Greek word used here is where we get our words pharmacy and medication from]), enmity (hatred), strife (contention for superiority, opposition to one another), jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions (disagreements in opinion, often violent disagreements), divisions, 21 envy (jealousy), drunkenness (intoxication), orgies (a nocturnal and riotous procession of half drunken and frolicsome fellows who after supper parade through the streets with torches and music in honour of Bacchus or some other deity, and sing and play before houses of male and female friends; hence used generally of feasts and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry), and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

This list that Paul gives here is what mankind practices willfully and continually apart from Jesus Christ. On the contrary, believers are no longer to practice these types of things. As Christians, Paul tells us to walk by the Spirit, who regenerated our dead hearts to new life in Christ. If you belong to Jesus, then you have been freed from your enslavement to sin and are now enslaved to righteousness. Paul tells us this reality next.

Galatians 5:22-25 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

After the sin of Adam, all people are…

1. **Due the Just Penalty of God’s Perfect Wrath**

Ephesians 2:3 says that in our deadness we were "children of wrath." That is, we are rightly due God's wrath because of the corruption of our hearts that made us enemies of God.

The reality of hell is God's clear indictment to the depth of fallen man’s guilt. The Scriptures teach that God is just in condemning unbelievers to eternal hell.

2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 6 since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels 8 in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might.

Another manifestation of fallen man’s corruption is that he is prone to deny the reality of Hell and God’s impending judgment. In fact, many talk about Hell as though it is the place where all the fun is going to be. They promote the idea that Hell is going to be one big party where anything goes. Why? Because the nature of a sinner is to see sin as good and fun. Sin causes man to see God’s good and perfect law as a hindrance to what he truly wants. In fact, if you call someone out, they may even say that only God can judge them. What they are really saying is shut up so I can sin in peace.

Others want to simply deny the existence of Hell or the afterlife. Sadly, there are many with great influence who are leading a lot of people to believe that because God is love, He would never send anyone to Hell. They paint Jesus as someone who only talked about love, peace, and happiness.

To correct this line of thinking let's look at what Jesus said in His very own teaching as He describes the judgment to come in Matthew 25 through three parables:

-In the first story the bridegroom returns suddenly, and the women who are not ready for his coming are excluded from the marriage feast (Matt. 25:10).

-In the story of the servants, the master returns to settle his accounts, and the evil, lazy servant is condemned: “Throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (v. 30).

-In the final story the king separates the sheep from the goats, sending the wicked “to eternal punishment” and the righteous “to eternal life” (v. 46).

Matthew 25:46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

According to Jesus himself, “There absolutely will be a future day of reckoning and judgment and many will be rightly condemned to hell as the wrath of God is still on them.” Paul says 5 But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. 6 He will render to each one according to his works: 7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. Romans 2:5-8

Many people love to argue, “God is so good, He could never send anyone to hell.” Listen closely in case you are told this. It is BECAUSE of God’s goodness that He MUST rightly judge and condemn guilty people to hell. His perfect justice means he must declare the guilty, guilty! And the sentence is death, eternal death.

If a human judge declared someone innocent who was clearly guilty, he would not be considered a “good judge” by any proper moral standard.

It is because God is love, that he MUST send people to hell. Letting a guilty person go free is not an act of love, it’s an act of treason.

Let’s make it more personal. Let’s say a guy murdered your mother. He was found guilty of the crime and at the sentencing the judge stood up and let him go free, no punishment. Would you call that an act of love? Would you call that judge a loving judge? Of course not.

So the presupposition that “God is good” is correct, but the conclusion that therefore, because He is good, means He won’t or can’t punish anyone is completely wrong and dangerous.

The Bible proclaims the sentence for sinners in…

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death…”

Jesus declared it in…

Matthew 7:13 “For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction…”

Hebrews 10:26-27 says “if we keep on sinning there is only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”

It must be understood that none of our excuses will have any weight before God.

As we read those stories in Matthew 25, we find that the people who were confronted by the Lord’s return made manifold excuses for themselves, just as people make excuses for their wickedness today.

You can get away with giving excuses to other people—your boss, your parents, your pastor. But you cannot excuse yourself before God.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.

Jesus said that the one who rejects Him and does not receive His words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day (John 12:48). When the Judge (meaning God) takes the bench, there will not be a single protest.

A lot of people today feel as though God owes mankind something. That mankind is owed salvation, or at least a chance to be saved. Listen, if God were obligated to be gracious to us, grace would no longer be grace and salvation would be based on human merit. To add anything we do to grace alone, is to deny grace alone! People may say that it is not fair for God to send people to hell. But that is the just penalty for sin. Pastor John MacArthur said that we don’t want fair, we want grace.

1. **The Gospel**

**Q37. What happened to mankind because of sin?**

After the sin of Adam, all people are guilty: born sinful by nature, enslaved to sin, and practice sin willingly and continually; therefore, all are due the just penalty of God’s perfect wrath.

Sin is the problem, the gospel of Jesus Christ is the cure. Mankind is desperate for it. The gospel is the good news of the grace and power of God to redeem undeserving sinners to eternal life through Jesus’ perfect, sinless life; substitutional, sacrificial death; and victorious resurrection from the grave. These sinners are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus alone from the eternal wrath they deserved, and are reconciled into an eternally secure relationship with God. Church, we must not keep this good news to ourselves. We must share it with all people, calling them to repent and believe in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

**Conclusion:**

Let’s close by praying from The Valley of Vision:

Merciful Lord,

Pardon all my sins of this day, week, year; all the sins of my life, sins of early, middle, and advanced years, of omission and commission, of morose, peevish and angry tempers, of lip, life and walk, of hard-heartedness, unbelief, presumption, pride, of unfaithfulness to the souls of men, of want of bold decision in the cause of Christ, of deficiency in outspoken zeal for His glory, of bringing dishonor upon thy great name, of deception, injustice, untruthfulness in my dealings with others, of impurity in thought, word and deed, of covetousness, which is idolatry, of substance unduly hoarded, improvidently squandered, not consecrated to the glory of thee, the great Giver; sins in private and in the family, in study and recreation, in the busy haunts of men, in the study of thy Word and in the neglect of it, in prayer irreverently offered and coldly withheld, in time misspent, in yielding Satan’s wiles, in opening my heart to his temptations, in being unwatchful when I know him nigh, in quenching the Holy Spirit; sins against light and knowledge, against conscience and the restraints of thy Spirit, against the law of eternal love. Pardon all my sins, known and unknown, felt and unfelt, confessed and not confessed, remembered or forgotten. Good Lord, hear; and hearing, forgive. Amen.

Church, may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.