

Wall of Sin

Matthew 5:21-48

PW Emerson – 4/14/2019 – Ten:27 Ministries

Let's take a moment and look at the story of sin entering the world. Genesis 3

Verses 6-7

⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

So, before sin, Adam & Eve wandered around the Garden of Eden naked. They interacted with God, naked.

Once they sinned, they immediately try to cover up being naked. They *KNEW* that they couldn't appear before God way they were – it was no longer appropriate.

God is holy, perfect, and pure.

They were coated with sin. And with that coating, they could no longer interact with God.

Have you ever been wearing clothes and been soaking wet? What did it feel like?

Icky

Imagine the dirtiest you've ever gotten.

How did it feel?

I imagine for Adam and Eve, who started out without sin, that's what being coated with sin felt like to them.

Let's take a look at a piece from the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 5:21-48

Murder

²¹ “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.

²³ “Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

²⁵ “Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

Adultery

²⁷ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your

whole body to be thrown into hell.³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Divorce

³¹ “It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’³² But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Oaths

³³ “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’³⁴ But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne;³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King.³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black.³⁷ All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Eye for Eye

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’³⁹ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.⁴⁰ And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well.⁴¹ If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles.⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?⁴⁷ And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

We have to ask ourselves Why did Jesus share this?

- This wasn't meant as a motivation for people to follow the law - we can't.
- It wasn't a pep rally – if you say you can do it, then you can do it!

It shows us the law – that no matter how hard we try, we will always come up short!

It shows us that WE built the barrier of sins between us and God.

Fitting that Jesus ended that piece with verse 48:

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

But ... it's not possible for us to be perfect by ourselves.

It is ONLY possible for us to be perfect when we rely on Jesus to cleans & purify us.

Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

WE ARE ONLY PERFECT WHEN WE ARE TOGETHER WITH JESUS.

I read about an incident with President Calvin Coolidge. He returned home from church, one Sunday. His wife, who was unable to attend, asked what the preacher's lesson was about. He replied sin. His wife pressed for more information about it. So he said, "Well, I think he was against it."

Augustine said, "Sin is believing the lie that you are self-created, self-dependent, and self-sustained.

I saw another writer not the following about sin:

Man calls it accident, God calls it an abomination.

Man calls it a blunder, God calls it a blindness.

Man calls it a defect, God calls it a disease.

Man calls it chance, God calls it a choice.

Man calls it fascination, God calls it fatality.

Man calls it an infirmity, God calls it iniquity.

Man calls it luxury, God calls it leprosy.

Man calls it liberty, God calls it lawlessness.

Man calls it a trifle, God calls it a tragedy.

Man calls it a mistake, God calls it madness

Man calls it a weakness, God calls it willfulness.

We have changed the names of sin, but God has not changed his attitude toward sin.

We cannot hide sin – it will show on our face.

Isaiah 3:9

⁹ The look on their faces testifies against them;
they parade their sin like Sodom;
they do not hide it.

Woe to them!

They have brought disaster upon themselves.

Sin will take a toll on our bodies

I Corinthians 11:30

³⁰ That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep.

Sin will be on our conscious

Psalm 51:3

³ For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.

Where do you think guilt comes from? Sins gnawing away at us

Numbers 32:23

“But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the LORD;
and you may be sure that your sin will find you out.

Illustration – we can't make up for our sibs

A man dies and goes to heaven. As usual, St. Peter meets him at the pearly gates.

St. Peter says, “Here’s how it works. You need 100 points to make it into heaven. You tell me all the good things you’ve done, and I give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you get in.”

“Okay” the man says, “I attended church every Sunday”

“That’s good, says St. Peter, “that’s worth two points”

“Two points?” he says. “Well, I gave 10% of all my earnings to the church”

“Well, let’s see,” answers St. Peter, “that’s worth another 2 points. Did you do anything else?”

“Two points? Golly. How about this: I started a soup kitchen in my city and worked in a shelter for homeless veterans.”

“Fantastic, that’s certainly worth a point, ” St. Peter says.

“Hmmm...,” the man says, “I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never cheated on her, even in my heart.”

“That’s wonderful,” says St. Peter, “that’s worth three points!”

“THREE POINTS!!” the man cries, “At this rate the only way I get into heaven is by the grace of God!”

“Come on in!”

We can’t fix the problems our sin created.

Isaiah 59:1-2

¹BEHOLD, THE Lord's hand is not shortened at all, that it cannot save, nor His ear dull with deafness, that it cannot hear.

²But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

Our sins are a barrier keeping us from being with God!

Imagine a wall that is so dense that we can’t even hear through it.

Think of the great wall of China. It’s thickness is 4.5 – 9 meters

Imagine playing with a friend on the other side. It’s darn near impossible.

The only thing that makes sense is to first remove the wall, the barrier.

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

This week we celebrate Good Friday & Easter, the time when God paid the price to remove the wall of sin from between us & God.

Romans 5:8

⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Chuck Swindoll told a story about when he was a young boy:

I'm told that when I was a small child, perhaps 3 years old, we lived in a one bedroom apartment and my little bed was located beside the bed of my parents. Dad said it was not uncommon during that time for him to awaken at night and hear a little voice whispering, Daddy? Daddy?

He would answer quietly, "What, Jimmy?"

Then I would reply, "Hold my hand!"

My dad would reach across the darkness and grope for my little hand, finally engulfing it in his. He said the instant he grabbed my hand, my arm would become limp and my breathing deep and regular. I had gone back to sleep. You see, I only wanted to know that he was there!

God reaches through the darkness to take our hand – so that we will know that He is there. On an Easter morning 2000 years ago, God's hand was able to reach the wall of sin that had so long separated us, and take it down ... if we let him.

This morning, let us pray for forgiveness for sins in our lives.