

**Teaching Series:** The Glory of Righteousness

**Title:** Session 10 – What Is Sin?

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## **Cleansing the Conscience of Sins**

### **What Is Sin?**

Now that we defined righteousness, we are in a better position to define sin, by comparison with righteousness, in a more holistic way. We said earlier that righteousness is the nature of God that defines His character and His ways of doing all things. 2 Peter 1:2-4 says that those who are in Christ have also become partakers of God's divine nature and righteousness:

#### **2 Peter 1:2-4 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,

<sup>3</sup> as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

<sup>4</sup> by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these ***you may be partakers of the divine nature***, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Just by looking at the definition of righteousness, we can deduct two things about sin. First, sin is also a nature the same way righteousness is a nature. In fact, the Bible shows that all human beings are born on this earth with a sin nature in their spirit, that was inherited from the first man, Adam. Second, sin is everything that God is not. ***Sin is the complete opposite to righteousness, to God's character, and to His ways of doing things.*** We can see this contrast illustrated in many passages of the Bible. Let's read just a few of them:

#### **Romans 6:18 (NKJV)**

<sup>18</sup> And having been set free from ***sin***, you became slaves of ***righteousness***.

#### **Romans 6:20 (NKJV)**

<sup>20</sup> For when you were slaves of ***sin***, you were free in regard to ***righteousness***.

#### **2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup> For He made Him who knew no sin to be ***sin*** for us, that we might become the ***righteousness*** of God in Him.

Similar to righteousness, there is positional sin and practical sin or, better said, inherited sin and manifested sin. Inherited sin or inherited righteousness decide your eternal destiny and have to do mainly with eternal damnation and eternal salvation respectively, while manifested sin and manifested

righteousness have to do with the quality of your life here on earth, as well as with eternal rewards after this life. People who remain with a sin nature by not accepting the sacrifice of Jesus, will go to eternal damnation in the lake of fire after physical death, no matter how many good and righteous deeds they did while living on earth. By contrast, those who change their sin nature into a righteousness nature and are transferred from death to life by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus for their sins (John 5:24), will go to eternal salvation in the presence of God after physical death, even though they still did sinful deeds in their lives on earth. Their eternal salvation is secured by their righteous nature received by faith as a free gift and not by their righteous deeds or manifested righteousness.

How should we define “manifested sin” that accompanies the sinful nature or is still present sometimes even in people with a righteous nature? In the eyes of most believers, manifested sin amounts only to immoral and wicked deeds, which have first been revealed by the human conscience when the first man fell, then by the Law of Moses as transgressions of the Ten Commandments, and later on by Jesus’ sermon on the Mount, where He expanded the moral law to the level of thoughts and intentions of the heart (Matthew 5-7). Finally, apostle Paul described in detail in his epistles this kind of manifestations of sin, in passages like Ephesians 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:10-21, and Colossians 3:5-9. These are: sexual immorality, adultery, homosexuality, impurity, lust, uncleanness of any kind, greed, obscenity, foolish talk, slander, abusive language, gossip, idolatry, theft, lying, drunkenness, abuse, sorcery, hate, envy, jealousy, strife, anger, rage, selfish ambition, dissension, murder, evil desires, and wickedness. These sinful deeds and attitudes are all sins of commission, mostly external, and they are the most obvious among all sinful behaviors. Then, there are sins of omission like when believers can do some good and yet don’t do it (James 4:17), or when they don’t love God with all their heart, and their neighbor as Jesus loved them.

However, there are also some other sinful deeds of omission that are less obvious, yet still sinful in God’s eyes. If you remember, I mentioned somewhere in the beginning of this book that righteousness does not consist only of morality, although morality is included in it. Righteousness is much more than that; it consists of God’s nature, character, and ways of doing things. Righteousness includes removal of all sin through Jesus’ sacrifice, as well as healing, prosperity, blessing, victory, peace, joy, wisdom, and eternal life. Since sin is the opposite of righteousness and the opposite of God’s nature, then allowing in our lives sickness, disease, poverty, financial lack, debt, lack of peace and joy, worry, sadness, melancholy, depression, stress, failure or fear of any kind, insecurity, overeating, etc. is also sin. Yes, you read that well:

**allowing sickness in your body is sin.** Accommodating lack, poverty, and debt in your life is sin. Being stressed and worried is sin. I am aware that what I've just said may come as a shock to many, because we might have never thought of sin in that way. Before you turn away and discard this teaching, allow me to give you biblical support for why I believe sin includes all those things.

Can you ever picture God, the Father, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus as being stressed out, worried, fearful, sick, poor, sad, insecure, or depressed? No, of course not, these attributes cannot even be mentioned in connection to God. Were any of these facets of death present in creation in the Garden of Eden before the Fall of man? As we know from the Bible, God didn't include them in His creation of the world and man. When did these sinful states of being enter the world? They all came in when man disobeyed God and sin entered the world. They are all manifestations of sin and death. Do you think by any chance that any of these effects of death will be present in heaven in the future life? No, of course not, even now they don't exist in God's presence or anywhere in the third heaven. Moreover, the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 6:19 that the born-again believers in Christ have become the temple of the Holy Spirit. Let's read them:

**1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV)**

<sup>16</sup> Do you not know that **you are the temple of God** and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

**1 Corinthians 6:19 (NKJV)**

<sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that **your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit** who is in you, Whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

If we go back to the Old Testament and think about the Tabernacle or the physical temples of God, was there any defilement or uncleanness allowed in them? No, there was none permitted. Since our bodies have become the temple of the Holy Spirit, any defilement of the body should not be allowed to stay in the body. Sickness is a defilement and a blemish of the body, which should not be permitted to remain in our bodies, as new creations in Christ, even if it attacks our bodies.

Let's see another proof from the Bible that sin indeed includes all those things. Romans 14:23 says that whatever is not from faith, or is not of faith is sin. Moreover, Hebrews 11:6 says that without faith it is impossible to please God. Now, you may ask, "Faith in what?" Faith in the Word of God, or in the Word of Grace, or in the Word of Christ. This Word is the instruction manual of the new creation. Romans 10:17 says the following:

**Romans 10:17 (NKJV)**

<sup>17</sup> So then *faith* comes by hearing, and hearing by *the word of God*.

**Everything that is not from faith in the Word of God is sin**, and without faith in the Word of God it is impossible for anyone to please God. The first act of faith in the Word is receiving salvation by grace through faith alone (Ephesians 2:8), and entering into the Kingdom of God. However, after entering the Kingdom of God, everything that is not of faith in the Word on this earth, is sin. Accepting sickness and disease in our body is lack of faith in what God's Word says that healing was purchased for us with Jesus' blood at the cross. Cultivating stress and worry in our lives is lack of faith in God's promises of protection and provision. Being fearful or insecure is lack of faith in God's love. 1 John 4:18 says that perfect love casts out fear. When you know with all your being that God loves you and He's always on your side, you don't fear anything. Being fearful in any way and being aware of God's love cannot coexist together. Lust and sexual immorality is lack of faith in what God's Word says that we have received a spirit of self-control at salvation (2 Timothy 1:7). Romans 6:7, 11 says this:

**Romans 6:7 (NKJV)**

<sup>7</sup> For he who has died (*in Christ*) **has been freed from sin**.

**Romans 6:11 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup> Likewise you also, reckon yourselves **to be dead indeed to sin**, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In the light of this comprehensive definition of sin, these passages can also be read and understood in the following way: if we died in Christ, we have been freed from sickness, poverty, stress, depression, fear, insecurity and failure. We need to be aware of the fact that we are dead indeed to sickness, poverty, stress, depression, fear, insecurity and failure, and alive to God in Christ. Let's see two more passages where we can replace sin with sickness and all the other facets of death:

**Romans 6:14 (NKJV)**

<sup>14</sup> For **sin shall not have dominion over you**, for you are not under law but under grace.

**Romans 8:2 (NKJV)**

<sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus **has made me free from the law of sin and death**.

Sickness, lack, debt, stress, and failure will not have dominion over us, because we are under grace. Grace includes healing, blessing, success, rest, peace, joy, and wisdom. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sickness and death, or the law of poverty and death, and so on. You can

put in these passages any of the attributes of death instead of the word “sin,” as they are equivalent. This understanding changes everything, isn't it? It certainly did change everything for me. It strengthened my resolve and determination to remove sickness, lack, stress, and worry from my life at any cost, because these effects of death are illegal for believers in Christ. Although sickness, poverty, stress, worry and fear are considered as a normal part of life by most people, they are not normal for Christians at all. The new creation in Christ is not a mere human, but a supernatural being.

Now, by including all the manifestations of the sinful nature, like sickness and poverty, in the definition of sin, we can access new insights about our sinful behaviors and addictions as well. The first insight is that ***God is not offended, angry, or upset by our sinful behaviors in the same way He is not offended when we are sick or in lack.*** He cannot be angry anymore with our sinful deeds, because all His wrath for our offences was poured once and for all on Jesus Christ at the cross. Our sinful behaviors don't change God's heart of love towards us the same way sickness and lack don't change His heart towards us. Our sinful behaviors make us suffer and destroy us the same way sickness and lack bring suffering. Moreover, our blessings are not affected in any way from God's side by our sinful deeds, because He is not granting them in time, depending on our level of holiness, but He has already given them all free in Christ. Not lastly, our eternal security of salvation is not affected by our sinful deeds the same way it is not affected by sickness and lack. That doesn't mean God is not grieved when we do sinful deeds the same way He is grieved when we are sick, in lack, depressed, or stressed out. According to Ephesians 4:30, the Holy Spirit is grieved by sin. However, grief is not anger or wrath, but rather pain of the heart caused by love that God experiences when He sees us destroying ourselves and our destinies through sinful behaviors and addictions, the same way He feels as a Father, when He sees us suffering unnecessarily of sickness, lack, depression, and fear, especially when He has already provided a powerful solution to all these types of death in His Son, Jesus Christ. He is grieved when we don't take advantage of the grace He has granted to us in Christ. God's justice and righteousness are not affected in any way by our sins, His heart towards us is not affected, and neither His fellowship with us. However, we are affected in a negative way by the sinful deeds, because we allow death to infiltrate our beings and minimize our faith ability to materialize all the inheritance God has left us in the spiritual realm. ***Sin affects the quality of our life here on earth.***

The second insight is that ***the natural and supernatural means of behavioral change and sanctification can overlap and complement each other only up to a point, the same way it happens with sickness.***

When you are sick, depending on the type of disease, you can employ some natural means to get well

again, like medical treatments or surgeries, which God can bless. These methods can remedy various health problems, either temporarily or permanently. However, there is also a better way, a supernatural way of healing by faith and grace alone, that doesn't necessarily conflict or cancel the natural medical ways, yet is also effective in curing incurable diseases and any type of bodily affections that the medical world cannot, such as: cancer, HIV, diabetes, blindness, deafness, infertility, and various other conditions. When facing these impossible situations, we have no other option but simply believe in God's Word about healing, with perseverance and patience until divine healing is manifested. We cannot add any human effort to these healings, except keeping our mind focused on what God's said about our healing, until grace is released and our condition removed.

Likewise, when it comes to sinful deeds and behaviors, some of these can be changed by natural means through your own efforts, although that change is not always guaranteed for the long-term. ***The most effective way to long-lasting change and sanctification is grace through simple faith***, especially when it comes to all kinds of addictions and areas of your life where you've been weak and struggling for a long time. I am talking about those areas in which you might have tried everything you knew to be free, without any significant and permanent victory, those areas in which you feel hopeless and feel like you will never be able to be free. In the same way you cannot do anything about a sickness for which there is no medical remedy, but only believe in the power of the cross, likewise you need to approach your sanctification. Most of the times, we rush into trying to change ourselves morally, because we feel that the means and decisions to become better are readily at our disposal and we don't insist on learning how to use the means of faith to release grace in those areas, that will produce supernatural lasting changes. Many people rely on their strong will and resolutions to correct moral faults or vices, which can be efficient for some time, though it involves human effort and it's a struggle for short-term results most of the times. The better and God-given solution to any behavioral change is faith and perseverance in grace. You might not see immediate results like you do when using your will, because it takes time for faith and conviction in the Word to grow, but once grace is released, the change is effortless. I will have a separate chapter on sanctification later on, but I just wanted to touch a little bit here on this subtle nuance from our life of faith.

After reading all these things about the concept of sin, can you begin to grasp how far we drifted off, as a body of Christ, from the life God intended for us believers to live here on earth? We dream about and focus so much on the life after death that we miss out the life that we are supposed to live here one earth,

in righteousness to the full. Can you also see how impossible is for us believers to try to live righteousness through our own efforts? We can only mime it maybe, without actually living in that divine authentic righteousness that flows only by faith. Walking in righteousness is a supernatural task that requires faith. Living in righteousness it's not struggling and focusing consciously on how to be better morally or do more good works. That is why the only type of life pleasing to God is the one lived by grace through faith. In order to live by faith on a regular basis, we need to expose ourselves as much as possible to the Word of God, meditate on it, declare it, and pray in tongues, until our mental processes, thought life, and emotions are so altered and in tune with the Holy Spirit that grace and power flow through us continuously and cause us to walk in righteousness unconsciously and effortlessly.