

## Doctrine - The Human Condition

Sign Title: The Human Condition

October 5, 2010

Good morning! Glad to have you with us. We are in a teaching series called “Doctrine - What Do We Believe?” In this series, we are reviewing the new Evangelical Free Church Statement of Faith. That statement is intended to help us articulate the big rocks of what we believe from the Bible.

Today, we are covering the third point of that statement called, *The Human Condition*. We are going to talk about sin, death and suffering. As you can see, it is going to be an encouraging morning. In all seriousness, this is important stuff. Until we understand the depth of sin and its affect upon ourselves and the planet, we won't have a healthy appetite for Christ. So let's jump in.

Has anyone noticed things are terribly wrong in this world? Do any of you watch the news and come away frustrated? There is no more good news. We are fighting wars to get the bad guys because we are the good guys. The bad guys think they are the good guys and we are the bad guys so everybody keeps fighting. Every day we hear of Wall Street corruption and payoffs. Money makes people do evil things. There is suffering, death, sickness, evil, and loss everywhere we look. It is just hard to accept the world the way it is. Doesn't it feel like life is supposed to be better than this?

When it comes time for an election, politicians tap into this. They tell us to elect them so our problems will go away. They claim they will balance the budget, lower our taxes, protect our civil freedoms and fight back the corruption in Washington. Did you notice, they never succeed?

Some people think money will solve the problems so they throw cash at programs for the poor, they invest in medical discoveries but people are still taking Prozac like they are breath mints.

The pastors and elders at Faith Free don't deal with evil and suffering in theory, we handle it daily in practice. It is hard to stand behind a couple and watch them hold their three day old infant grow cold in their arms as he slowly dies. Just this past week I shook a guys hand at the door and he dropped dead 48 hours later. It is hard listening to the stories of husbands who leave their wife for another woman or a women who has an affair on her husband. Why is life this way? The Bible says all the pain, heartache and disaster of this world blossomed out of one act of sin. This morning, we are going to study sin.

### **What is sin?**

In Hebrew, the Jews have a word called *Shalom*. Shalom means perfection, wholeness, everything is as it should be, beauty, honor, love, no wars, no famine, no disease or hospitals, no funerals, no police, no military, no jails, no problems - Shalom. This is the word Jewish folk use when they greet one another. It is much richer than simply saying, "Hello."

Sin is attacking and vandalizing Shalom in this world. It shows up as death, suffering, injustice, misery, fear, illness, sorrow, hopelessness and tragedy.

### **Sin is omission and commission.**

Let me give you a more functional definition of sin. Sin is omission and commission. Commission is doing what we are not supposed to do. Omission is not doing what we are supposed to. Let me give you an example. Say you drop

you child off at day care. It turns out that one of the people working at the day care center is a sicko child molester and your kid becomes one of their victims. The sicko committed a sin of commission in what he did to your child. The day care, and possibly you as the parents, committed a sin of omission because nobody did a background check or went out of their way to protect the children. So sin is more than just doing something wrong, it is a failure to do something right.

### **Sin is deeper than actions.**

According to the Bible, sin is much deeper than our actions. Sin includes our thoughts, and our words and not just our deeds. Sin can even include our motives. That means the guy who greets the cute girl after church and is motivated by lust rather than New Testament Christian love, that is sin.

### **Sin is ignoring God.**

Sin is blowing God off in our life, that is called godlessness.

### **Sin is giving affections to something more than God.**

Sin is giving your affections to something other than God, that is called idolatry.

### **Sin is not necessarily criminal.**

Most sins are not considered criminal and you won't be arrested for them. If you commit adultery, the police will not arrest you; if you lust, the police will leave you alone; if you tell a white-lie, most people won't even know the difference.

### **Sin is breaking God's laws.**

Some sins do involve breaking laws, but the laws we need to concern ourselves with are God's laws, not just the criminal code. For example, if you are a kid, not honoring your parents is breaking one of God's laws. If you are passing on gossip, that is breaking God's laws.

### **Sin is breaking the law of conscience.**

Some sins don't involve breaking specific laws from God, rather, they involve breaking the law of conscience.

**But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. Romans 14:23 (ESV)**

If God has convicted your conscience about something, that is what you need to abide by. For example, I have a friend who is convinced he needs to worship on Saturday rather than Sunday. I will open my Bible and show him why I worship on Sunday and why I am convinced that is the day of worship rather than Saturday but, as long as he is still convicted in his conscience that Saturday is the right day of worship, he needs to continue to worship on Saturday. For him not to would be sinful because he would be violating his conscience.

### **Sin is taking something good and twisting it evil.**

Sin includes taking something good and twisting it evil. For example, we can use the internet to send encouraging emails and find helpful Christian web sites. The internet can also be turned into a pipeline of sin for your mind. It can be twisted evil. It is the same for money, sex, power. They are intended to be good things in and of themselves but, through sin, we can take them and twist them into an evil thing.

## **Sin is finding our identity in something besides God's love through Jesus.**

Sin is placing our identity in anyone or anything other than Jesus. This happens to mothers with their kids. Mom's, you pour your entire life into your children and then during their teenage years their brains fall out of their head. Your kids begin making a complete disaster of their life. What happens to moms identity when their kids are falling apart? If the kids are falling apart, moms feel like a failure because her identity is her kids. Mom, your identity is not your kids, your identity is found in Jesus. Raising kids is something moms do, it is not who they are. If your kids don't turn out perfect, it doesn't mean you are a failure. Mom, you are a image-bearer of God. God made you. God loves you and you are more than just a mother.

## **Is all sin equal?**

This is something many people get completely wrong. In one respect, all sin is equal, in another respect, they are not equal.

## **Sin makes us equally guilty.**

**You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. Matthew 5:48 (ESV)**

Matthew 5:48 says we are to be perfect as our heavenly father is perfect and anything short of perfection is sin, no matter what it is.

**For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it. James 2:10 (ESV)**

James 2:10 says that if we violate the law at one point, we violate all of it. So it is like a light switch. We either are sinful or we are not sinful. It is either on or off, there is no in between.

### **All sin is not equally devastating and equally judged.**

On the other hand, all sin is not equal. Not all sin is equally devastating in its consequences. That is why there is a judgment of works when we stand before Christ. As we learned in the *Mysteries of Heaven* series, while hell is still hell, for some people, hell will be even more hideous because God is fair in his punishment of sin. Judgment is not just something those who don't know Christ will face, but is it true for us who do know him.

**Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness. James 3:1 (ESV)**

James 3:1 says not many should become teachers because teachers are judged with greater strictness. Even when we are saved, it matters how we live.

### **What is total depravity?**

We don't believe in *utter depravity*. If we were utterly depraved, that means sin would so devastate us that we would be worse off than animals. We are not *utterly* depraved, we are not as evil as we could be. Let's face it, all of us could be more evil if we tried. Unless we are doing all the evil we could potentially do, we are not *utterly depraved*. But we are *totally depraved*.

### **We are totally depraved but not utterly depraved.**

Totally depraved means sin affects everything about us. That includes our mind. We do not think as we ought. Don't trust your mind to always tell you what is right. This includes our emotions. What we feel is not always an indicator of what is right. I know some intense feelers. They think if they feel right about something, it must be right. Think again. We need to learn to doubt our feelings a bit. They could be wrong. They are affected by sin. Our thoughts are affected

by sin, our conscience is affected by sin, our desires are affected by sin. Total depravity means sin affects all of who we are. That doesn't mean we do nothing right. There are still remnants of goodness in us. This is why we have people like the Good Samaritan who live a seemingly decent life and do some decent things. We are not *utterly depraved*, but we are *totally depraved*.

### **What are some sinful views of sin?**

When we sin, we even sin in how we see our sin. Here are some sinful views of sin.

#### **Sin is just breaking rules.**

Sin is much more than breaking some rules. The rules of Scripture are not arbitrary. They are there because they represent God's character. When we break God's laws, we violate God's nature and break frustrates our relationship with him. Think of it like this. Your wife's old boyfriend lives in town. You asked her not to talk with him or spend time with him because she is now married to you. The two of you are in an exclusivity marriage relationship. Pretend she decides to break the rules and has lunch with her old boyfriend. What happens? The issue isn't the breaking of the rule, it is the breaking of the relationship between the two of you. That is the same way it is with sin. Sin is much more than breaking a rule, it is breaking the relationship we are intended to be in with God.

#### **Jesus died for my sin, it doesn't matter what I do.**

I have seen this many times. People say they are forgiven because they have trusted in Christ so when they are tempted to sin, they figure it is no big

deal to give in to sin because they are forgiven anyway. This happens all the time with sexual sins. The pull of sexual sins are strong so we rationalize our way into them. Jesus rose from the dead to free us from the death and destruction sin reaps in our lives. By definition, sin is *always* bad. Sin will *always* ruin us. There is never benefit to sin. To be forgiven of sin, but then to willingly walk right back into it again and again when Christ died to free us from its destructive power makes no sense. Lest we get too confident in easy forgiveness, remember the Bible tells us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. It matters how we live.

**God knows my heart; that is what counts.**

Some people believe that while their words are filled with hatred or their actions are wicked, they are good with God because God knows their heart. He knows that on the inside, they are really a good person. Here is the problem. Our life on the outside is just a reflection of our heart on the inside.

You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Matthew 12:34 (ESV)

You can't say your heart is good but your life is bad. Your life is just an overflow of your heart. There is total congruence between who we are in our heart and who we are in life. There is no such thing as a good person on the inside who is promiscuous, gossiping or divisive on the outside. Everything always connects back to your heart.

**My sin doesn't matter as long as nobody gets hurt.**

I hear this all the time from people who are sleeping together. They are consenting adults and they aren't hurting anyone. I assure you somebody is



getting hurt. First of all, you are hurting yourself. Second, you are hurting the person you will eventually marry. Third, if you are in church, you are affecting the holiness and purity of the entire church body. Fourth, you are hurting your relationship with God. Fifth, you are thwarting eternal rewards that far outweigh any earthly joys your sin provides.

**It is only sinful if I get caught.**

Secret sins count. You know about the sin. God knows about the sin. It affects who you are with other people even if they don't know what the sin is, they can feel its presence in your life. I see this with men. The wife comes in with her husband because he is distant and cold. She wants help working on their intimacy. The conversation goes something like this.

Hey guy, what are you looking at on the internet?...

Nothing but Ebay....

I don't believe you, tell me the truth....

I thought we were working on communication skills?...

We are, I am communicating, now it is your turn....

Maybe I have looked at a few things I shouldn't...

Tell the *whole* truth.

What he is looking at filled him with guilt and shame. It separated him from his wife and made him walk around all day with shame. Every time the telephone rings, he jumps two feet in the air because he thinks he is about to get caught. Your wife knew, your friends knew, everyone else knew something was wrong.

## What are some sinful responses to sin?

### I'm the exception to the rule.

I see this all the time. These people think the Bible is true for everyone else, but they are the exception to the rule. I see this in young couples. They know they are not supposed to live together before marriage but the boyfriend lost his job and they are going to get married in a few years anyway. So it is OK because we are the exception to the rule.

### Blame Shifting

This is when people blame their sin on other people. They say it is not their fault. It is someone else's fault they are sinning. I dealt with a situation where the guy was yelling at his wife all the time. Dude, you need to lighten up. 1 Peter 3 says guys need to be considerate and gracious towards their wives. What does he say? "She *makes* me really angry. That is why I yell." Who cares! She may make you angry, but you choose how you are going to respond. Don't shift the blame for your sin to her.

### Partial Confession

This is confessing a little bit of what you did hoping nobody will find the rest of the story. It is like when I am in a counseling situation and the wife brings up evidence that her husband has been less than faithful to her. What does he do? He says, "Yes, I was with this other woman once. Trust me it wasn't much of anything. I don't have feelings for her." You and I know that is not the whole story. It is only the first layer of the story. Partial confession happens all the time.

Be honest, give the rest of the story. I know it is ugly. Confess the whole thing.  
Be forgiven for the whole thing.

### **Worldly Sorrow**

Paul talks about this. It is, “I feel bad I was caught for my sin but I do not feel bad about my sin.” It is sorrow just for the effects of sin, not for the sin.

### **I’m a Victim**

I’m a victim. I can’t help it. I was molested as a child. My genes are bad. It’s my upbringing. I grew up poor. I grew up rich. I wasn’t given enough affection. Now I understand, there are circumstances that make us more predisposed toward particular sins, but that doesn’t give us a green light for sin. For example, a soldier in the army does not have an excuse to cheat on his wife because he is away from her serving in the military, nor does a wife have an excuse to cheat on her husband because he is gone serving his country.

### **Mere Confession**

This is people who say, “Yes, I know what I am doing is wrong, but I am not changing my ways.” These people are so confusing. For example, a young Christians couple knows it is wrong to live together. They know it is sin, but they just don’t care, they are doing it. This is the wife who knows her words are to bless her family but she is brittle and cutting anyway. When someone talks to her about it, she knows she is acting in sin but she has no plans to change. There is confession, but no repentance. They say, “Thank you for helping me see my sin but I really don’t care to change.”

## How does God respond to sin?

God judges sin. We see this right in the story of Adam and Eve. They were cast out of the Garden of Eden and taken away from the tree of life so they would die. Life became a burden for them, not a blessing. Much of the joys were turned into sorrow. God judges sin because he is just, holy and good. He will judge our sin finally and completely by casting us into the Lake of Fire with the devil and the fallen angels. Thankfully there is more to the story.

God, out of His love, extended grace. God pursued Adam and Eve. They were hiding, he found them. Then in Genesis 3:15, God made a promise. The promise is that Jesus is coming. Jesus is going to be the second Adam. In every area the first Adam failed, the second Adam would succeed. Just as the first Adam cast the rest of his family tree into death, pain and destruction. The second Adam, Jesus Christ, would cast all of his family line into life, joy and a new creation. How did Jesus do it?

**For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV)**

Friends, the right response to sin is confession and repentance. Then we trust in Christ to forgive us and to change us. I don't know where you are with sin. I believe God brought a particular area of sin in your life to mind this morning. Please, repent of it. Trust Christ to forgive you. Ask God's Holy Spirit to help you see sin for how hideous it is. Listen to me. Your sin is killing you. It is killing the ones you love. It is killing everyone. It is contributing to the horrors of this world and most of all, it is separating you from God. I ask you, through the work of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit; repent of your sin, confess your

sin to those you sinned against and ask their forgiveness, trust in Christ for forgiveness ask the Holy Spirit to change the sinful desires of your heart. He will.



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