

The BEACON



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Romans 3:23 teaches that “all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.” Romans 6:23 teaches that “the wages of sin is death.” We all have sin in common. After we reach the age of accountability we all face a constant battle with the devil. He is our “adversary who goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). He does not fight fair and is vicious in his pursuit of all of us. It angers him that anyone tries to be a servant of God. He is not discriminating and spares no person from his advances. There is never a time when we will not have to face his barrage of temptations toward us to do evil.

SIN

In God’s sight, sin is sin. All of us have sinned and all of us stand worthy of death and there is no amount of good works that we can dream up on our own that will merit the salvation that the Lord offers to us through the blood of His dear Son. God is so loving and gracious to us in allowing us to be instructed by His Word in the right ways that lead to life eternal.

The devil would want us to minimize sin and consider some sins greater than other sins. Most people today realize that the consequences of some sins are greater than the consequences of others. The physical consequences or lack of does not make one sin greater than any other in God’s sight. That is one of the devil’s deceptions.

There are basically two areas of sin.

Discovered/Undiscovered- Committed/Neglectful- Forgiven/Unforgiven.

There is no sin that we cannot be forgiven of if we are willing to repent, pray and confess our sins before God and if necessary before our brethren. There is no sin so great that the blood of Christ will not cover. Many times we as brethren are prone to be more alarmed and unforgiving over discovered sins. These are sins that people are caught doing and are open before all. They would include sins like fornication (if a pregnancy occurs) Drinking, Stealing, Murder, Drugs (if any arrest occurs). While all of these sins are serious and if not repented of will condemn one to hell, we should be careful not to forget that for every discovered sin of these types, there are a number of people who may commit the same sins, but never be discovered. They may be deceived into thinking that since no one knows, I have gotten away with my sin. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Lord knows what we do whether or not our fellow brethren do or not. We cannot hide anything from God. Sins of commission are just as condemning as sins of omission. Sins that are discovered often are a mixed blessing, due to the fact that with many, as long as they get away with the sin before others, they are unwilling and negligent in repenting of that which others do not know about. Let us all make sure that sooner or later “our sins will find us out.” Repent of your sins before it is too late. ---SWA---

In The Mud

(Psalm 1; 2 Peter 2:22)

By Matt Adams

I want to relate to you a scenario that is representative of our lives every day we live. Follow along and imagine where you would fall in with each choice physically. Relate your decision to what you would do spiritually and see if they are any different. First, let's set the scene with what you are wearing: what you are wearing is the best outfit of clothes you have ever owned in your life, I mean you are dressed UP! You are looking good! You are so proud and oh so thankful for what you are wearing! In the distance you hear the sound of laughter, it seems to be some sort of party so you walk up and see this loud demonstration going on, you are curious so you move closer... It is all of your best and closest friends in this life. They are out at the mud hole playing around having what seems to be the time of their lives! It is a big ol' time, everyone is there and you are the only one not getting muddy with them. So as you get closer you stop and observe, and begin thinking to yourself: "Well, it looks harmless and they look like they are sure having a good time. But I don't know, something just does not seem right, I feel so out of place..." When suddenly, you are splashed with mud... You are upset...

We stop here to see the next course of action (keep in mind what you have on):

1. You leave! You go home, wash your clothes, get a shower, and will not be going back.
2. You are irritated, but you decide to stick around and resolve to move away from the mud with the reasoning that you are "just going to observe." So you stand over in the grass.
3. You are irritated, but you begin to rationalize sticking around...they are your friends and you know they did not mean to harm you. It couldn't possibly happen again, and besides, you don't want to hurt their feelings or disrespect them by leaving. You'll stick around "just to observe." You say you are not going to get in the mud you will just take a walk around the edge of the mud hole just close enough to not be fully in it.
4. Same as the previous, but this time you stay right where you are and do not bother to move away from you got splashed. You are still not fully in the mud, you are "just observing," so you have a seat.
5. The first splash bothered you, but it doesn't bother you for very long. You stick around and continue to be splashed with mud, each time it bothers you less and less. Eventually you do not mind it anymore and you jump in with them and engage in what they are all doing without a thought of ever getting out or doing otherwise.

In all instances, besides the first, you keep getting splashed with the mud even though you are not in it. In short, as long as you are around the mud you are being effected by it whether you intend to or not. Did you notice how quickly after the first choice to run away that what you had on was forgotten?

Herein lies the lesson: Each day we are presented with a multitude of choices of what to do or not do; conversations to engage in or not; jokes to tell/laugh at or not; taking opportunities to teach or not; running away from sin or running into sin. The fact is, if we do not keep in the forefront of our minds what we are supposed to be clothed with as Christians (Eph. 6:11-18) and what we are to seek (Matt. 6:33) then we will fall into the sin time and time again never learning the lesson and getting deeper each time. Notice how we were not portrayed as perfect people who can do not sin (Rom. 3:23), however we are to do as 1Thess. 5:22 says and flee every appearance of evil. Yet despite our efforts, we each will fall from time to time but the choices are ours to make regarding what we do about the temptation (1Cor. 10:12). Sure, the mud hole looked like a lot of fun and the world would have you believe that you are missing out if you are not joining in with them in it, and sins is like that. When confronted with the choice to sin or not we will do one of two things: run away or edge closer until we are consumed. As Christians we are not to try to get as close as we can without sinning, we are to get away and want no part of it! Remember that God told us that which each temptation there is a way of escape (1Cor. 10:13). He has laid out the way of escape for us in His word. The life of a Christian is fun, we associate with the salt of the earth, have family as adopted children of His, and though we may have trials and troubles in this life, as long as we are pleasing to Him we have hope, peace (Phil. 4:7) and freedom from sin. Our reward is in the end, so we need not let ourselves assume that we are "missing out on a good time" if we do not run to sin as the world does. Though everyone around us may jump into the mud, let us see it for what it is and do our best to keep ourselves totally free from it (1Thess. 5:22; Phil. 2:15,16; 4:7,8), guard ourselves (Eph. 6:13-17), and run to safety in the arms of our Lord God with each choice we make daily.

God bless us all, and may we all strive to please Him by casting our earthly desires aside (1Jn. 2:15-17). Heaven awaits us if we are faithful (Rev. 2:10).

Safety Tips

1. Do not ride in an automobile (or get in the way of one), as automobiles cause a lot of fatal accidents.
2. Do not stay at home; that's where many accidents occur.
3. Do not walk across the street; pedestrians are often victims of accidents.
4. Do not travel by air, rail or water; a great deal of accidents are the result of these activities.

Only a small amount of all fatal accidents occur during worship and Bible class.

Obviously, the safest place to be is in worship and Bible study.

I hope to see YOU in Bible study and worship this coming Lord's Day!

