

English Transcript

Foundations of the Christian Faith – Course 2

Lesson 5 - Sin (Part 2)

Welcome back to Foundations of the Christian Faith. This is course 2 and Lesson 5. This is our second lesson on the doctrine of Sin.

In this lesson we will discuss imputed sin, inherited sin, and personal sin. We will address the question of how Adam's sin impacts us today? We are continuing on page 25 in the handout.

Our first topic is the Imputation of Adam's sin.

To impute means to attribute, reckon, or ascribe something to someone. We are counted guilty before God because of Adam's sin. Some refer to Imputed Sin as Inherited Guilt.

The apostle Paul explains the effect of Adam's sin this way: *"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way, death came to all people, because all sinned."* (Romans 5:12)

Paul states that this one man is Adam and his one act of disobedience negatively impacted all humanity.

All members of humanity were represented by Adam, before God, in the time of testing in the Garden of Eden. As our legal representative before God, Adam sinned and God counted us guilty as well as Adam. This is the concept of imputing, or reckoning, or ascribing something to someone else.

Humanity is joined to Adam and Adam's sin. We all share Adam's sin and Adam's guilt. We are all equally guilty in need of a remedy for our sin.

Grammatically the expression "all sinned" does not refer to our individual sins or our sinful nature. It means that all sinned when Adam sinned. This is the point of Romans 5:18, *"Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people..."* We are each held responsible for Adam's sin just as if we each sinned.

The penalty for imputed sin is physical death. Each person's physical death was sealed and certain ever since Adam sinned. Once again Romans 5:12 states, *"Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way, death came to all people, because all sinned—"*

This is not referring to our sin nature that we will discuss in the next section under inherited sin. Our sin nature is not responsible for our physical death. Our sin nature is focused on spiritual death (Ephesians 2:3).

The remedy for imputed sin only is the imputed righteousness of Christ. The moment anyone trusts in Christ as Savior, Christ's righteousness is reckoned or imputed to that individual. Romans 5:18-21 affirms this truth, *"Consequently, just as one trespass resulted in condemnation for all people, so also one righteous act resulted in justification and life for all"*

people. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

As all are in Adam, so all believers are in Christ. And being in Christ means that his righteousness is ours.

When we place in our trust in Christ. We are in Christ. His righteousness is added to our account.

Not all evangelical theologians agree that we are counted guilty because of Adam's sin. However, evangelicals of all persuasions do agree that we receive a sinful disposition or a sinful nature as an inheritance from Adam. Imputed sin is transmitted directly from Adam to everyone in every generation. Since I was in Adam, Adam's sin was imputed to me directly, not through my parents and their parents, and so on.

There are two pictures at the bottom of page 25 to compare and contrast the process of transmission for imputed sin and inherited sin.

Imputed sin is transmitted from Adam to Seth, to Enoch, to my father, and to me collectively. It is not transmitted from generation to generation as is depicted with inherited sin. As the name implies, inherited sin is passed on from one generation to the next. The diagram shows Adam's sin nature was transmitted to Seth, then from Seth to Enoch and over many generations to my father and then to me.

This notion of inherited sin is at the heart of the supernatural conception of Jesus through the Holy Spirit in the life of Mary. Joseph's sin nature was not inherited by Jesus because Joseph was not the natural father. In Jesus' humanity, he did not inherit a sin nature like all other humans.

Turn with me to page 26 as we continue this discussion related to Inheritance of Sin.

Inherited sin is that sinful state into which all people are born. Some also refer to Inherited Sin as Inherited Corruption.

All sin impacts others. We do not sin in a vacuum. Eve's sin affected Adam and Adam's sin affected the entire human race. No one sins totally in private without impacting others.

Sin, once committed, can never be undone. Forgiveness can be experienced and fellowship can be restored, but history cannot be changed or erased. Could Adam and Eve return to the garden? No! Could Esau retrieve the birthright he sold to Jacob? No! Could Moses personally enter the promised land? No! Could the kingdom have been restored to King Saul following his disobedience to Samuel and God? No!

We inherited this sin nature from our parents all the way back to Adam and Eve. You see that in Genesis 4:1-2. *“Adam made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, ‘With the help of the Lord I have brought forth a man.’ Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.”*

We see this truth is Psalm 51:5, *“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”*

This means that everyone born into this world is a sinner. No one is born good nor is anyone born partly good or partly sinful. All are equally sinful in God's sight, guilty before a Holy God. We are dead in our transgressions and sins. The Scriptures make this very clear.

The penalty related to inherited sin is spiritual death. Remember with imputed sin from Adam, the consequence was physical death. In Adam, all die. The penalty for inherited sin is spiritual death. This is separation from the life of God in this present life.

Refer to Ephesians 2:1-3, *“As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.”*

If this condition continues unchanged throughout life, the eternal death or second death is what will follow. Revelation 20 verses 11-15. *“Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.”*

The Bible clearly states that all aspects of man's being are corrupt. By nature, we are children of wrath or objects of God's wrath. By our actions, we are also objects of God's wrath. Every facet of man's being is affected by this sin nature.

Our intellect is blinded. 2 Corinthians 4:4.

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Our mind is debased. Romans 1:28.

Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done.

Our understanding is dark and separated from the life of God. Ephesians 4:18.

They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

Our emotions are degraded and defiled. Romans 1-21, 24 and 26. Also Titus 1:15.
For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1:21)

Therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. (Romans 1:24)

Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. (Romans 1:26)

To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. (Titus 1:15)

Our will is enslaved to sin and therefore stands in opposition to God. Romans 6:20 and 7:20.

When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. (Romans 6:20)

Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. (Romans 7:20)

Since God's standard for acceptance is perfection, the fact that sin taints every part of our lives mean that in our nature we lack what is necessary to be seen as holy by God.

For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. (Romans 7:18)

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

The theological term for this state of being is called "total depravity." The word depravity means "not standing the test." Man fails the test of pleasing God. It is "total" because it affects all aspects of man's being and it affects all people.

There are many Scriptures that support this position.

Isaiah 64:6 – our most righteous acts are like filthy rags. Matthew 7:17-18 Bad trees can only produce bad fruit. Psalm 51:5 – conceived in sin from birth. Ephesians 2:1-3 – we are dead in our trespasses and sin. John 3:19 – we love darkness. John 8:34 – we are slaves to sin. Romans 3:10-11 – there is no one righteous, no one who does good, no one who seeks God. Romans 1:18 – we suppress the truth. 1 Cor 1:18 – we reject the gospel as foolishness.

While sin touches every part of our lives, we are not corrupt in every conceivable way. God's image is still present in the human soul. It is merely corrupted by sin. Humans can do good morally apart from Christ however good actions can never cancel sin or merit favor in the sight of God.

There are two opposing worldviews.

The humanistic view states that humans are good and getting better.

The biblical worldview states sin has infected every aspect of our life and soul, and we are spiritually dead and separated from the life of God, without God and without hope in this world. All people are sinful before God and our ability does not limit our responsibility. We need salvation from outside of us.

The remedy for inherited sin is redemption. This includes a judgment on the sin nature so that the believer is no longer bound to serve sin. All that belongs to the old life when we put our trust in Christ has been crucified with Christ. The death of Christ set us free from the dominion and penalty of inherited sin. We are also set free from the power of sin in our daily lives through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation.

Romans 6:18

You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

Romans 8:1-2

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Galatians 5:24.

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

On page 27 there is a chart that summarizes various theories related to how Adam's sin has been inherited by his descendants. These views have important implications for our understanding of how people can be saved from our sinful condition. And I will leave that to you to read. As with all teaching and doctrine, we must compare it with the full counsel of Scripture.

We have discussed the doctrine of Imputed Sin and Inherited Sin with definitions, consequences, and remedies. We need a Savior to address both aspects of sin. We need redemption through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us now discuss the topic of Personal Sin on page 28. Personal sin is any thought, attitude, or act or failure to act, that violates God's standards of perfect holiness.

James 3:2. *We all stumble in many ways.*

Romans 3:23. *All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

The penalty for personal sin in the life of an unbeliever is eternal separation from God unless he/she turns to Christ for salvation.

The penalty for the believer, is the temporary loss of fellowship with God when we live with unrepentant, unconfessed sin until we confess our sin and receive the ongoing forgiveness and cleansing promised in 1 John 1:9. This is an ongoing process. We are always in union

with God as a believer, but we may not always be in communion. We are always in relationship, but we may not always be walking in close fellowship with God. We are always sealed with the Holy Spirit but may not be filled with the Holy Spirit moment by moment.

Personal sins are obviously related to both inherited sin and imputed sin. Personal sins are the visible and knowable expression of our inherited sin nature and imputed sin. Personal sins are how a person knows he has a sin problem.

The chart on page 28 is a helpful tool to summarize these three doctrine points related to sin: Imputed Sin, Inherited Sin, and Personal Sin.

The problem with Imputed Sin is found in Romans 5:12. Sin is transmitted directly from Adam. The consequence is physical death. The remedy is the righteousness of Christ imputed to each believer at the moment of salvation.

The problem with Inherited Sin is found in Ephesians 2:3. This is transmitted from one generation to the next. The consequence is spiritual death or separation from God. The remedy is Christ death for sinner and the washing and rebirth through the Holy Spirit. Our response is to trust in Christ's atoning sacrifice for our sin. We become a new creation at that point and take on a new spiritual nature and identity in Christ as children of God.

The problem with Personal Sin is related to both imputed and inherited sin. The consequence for the unbeliever is loss of relationship with God and loss of fellowship with God for the believer. The remedy for both the believer and unbeliever is the death of Christ for our sin. The response for the unbeliever is the trust in Christ's sacrifice for sin. The response for the believer is to confess our sin and get back in step with the Holy Spirit.

We will close this lesson with a discussion on what the Bible says about sin in the life of a Christian. This is on page 29.

You can see that all people are sinful before God and stand condemned apart from Christ.

And we have been talking about that. This teaching is found throughout the entire Bible. King David said it. The apostle Paul said it. James said it. John said it. Even infants are guilty from the moment of conception because of Adam's sin.

Christians still have a sin nature. Believers have both the sin nature and the new nature. The old nature is not removed or destroyed in this life. That is why we continue to commit personal sin.

As believers, we are continually opposed by the world, our flesh, and Satan.

The world is the fallen system corrupted by sin that is under the control of Satan, the ruler of the kingdom of the air.

The flesh is our sin nature characterized by lusts and passions.

Satan is the Deceiver, the Father of Lies, the Accuser of the brethren, the Roaring Lion looking to devour.

The Bible provides clear descriptions of the litany of sins that reflect our old nature. The list on page 29 provides examples of sins that Jesus highlighted in his teaching.

It is helpful to identify sinful thoughts, actions and attitudes and call them using the name that God uses. As you review this brief list you will notice hypocrisy, covetousness, and blasphemy. Pride, causing others to sin, and immorality. Anger, unclean speech, greed, and prayerlessness.

On page 30, God has provided ways to prevent sin in our lives. We are blessed with the Word of God. Psalm 119: 9 and 11 says, *“How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I have hidden your word in my heart, so I will not sin against you.”*

Jesus’ prayer in John 17:17, *“Father sanctify them by your truth, your word is truth.”*

Jesus is praying for us. He lives to make intercession for us.

We have the indwelling Holy Spirit. Galatian 5:16-25

So, I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, and debauchery, and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions, and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

And we have the grace of God. In Titus 2 we are told that the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all people. And God’s grace is teaching us to say no to ungodliness and teaching us to say yes to a life that is honoring to God.

For believers, sin brings consequences into our lives and our relationship with God. The consequences of sins may vary widely. For example, sins of the heart, such as adultery, make one as guilty as the actual act. However, the damage done by lustful thoughts may not be as severe as the actual action.

All people are equally guilty before God, in terms of legal guilt, yet some sins have more harmful consequences in life and our relationship with God.

As believers, our standing before God is unchanged when we sin. We remain justified based on what Jesus has done. There is no condemnation for anyone who is in Christ. Jesus paid for all of our sins, including past, present, and future sins. However, our fellowship with God

can be disrupted. We may experience a loss of joy. We may experience a darkened walk. We may have a lack of confidence in prayer.

God the Father continues to love us as his children, and He disciplines us in love to purify us and produce a harvest of righteousness.

When we sin, God the Son is disrespected. Continuing to sin shows disrespect for the giver of the gift of eternal life. God the Holy Spirit is also grieved when we sin. Prolonged sin can make us insensitive to the Spirit's work in our lives. It is possible to resist and quench the Holy Spirit's work in our lives.

For believers, God's punishment for sin came upon Jesus. We may be disciplined for our sin but never condemned.

Patterns of sin in our lives also damage us. The more we yield to sin, the more we become slaves of sin. When we sin, we may also lose some of our heavenly rewards. 1 Cor 3:12-15 says, *"If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss but will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames."*

Works for Jesus done sinfully or with sinful motives are like the wood, hay, and stubble for which we receive no reward at the Bema Seat judgment references in 2 Cor 5:10. *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."*

For believers who persist in sin, more severe consequences may follow. There may be chastening as described in Hebrews 12. Sickness may be a form of chastening as seen in 1 Corinthians 11:30, *"That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep."* This was in response to the church in Corinth abusing the Lord's Table.

The intended goal of all discipline though is restoration and reconciliation.

The remedy for the believer's sin may be stated in one word, CONFESSION. 1 John 1:9 makes this clear. *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

To confess means to agree with God about whatever sin we have committed. True confession produces a desire to change called repentance. Even if we struggle with repeated sin, the solution is still confession and repentance. Positionally, all sin is already forgiven, but we claim and experience this forgiveness by confession as we continue to live out our faith. This is part of the ongoing sanctification process. God will eventually present us faultless and blameless before His throne. When we confess, the joy of fellowship with God is restored. The Holy Spirit is then free to fill us and continue to transform us from glory to glory, day by day.

For the unbeliever, God's punishment for sin involves eternal separation from God and torment in a place referred to as a lake of fire. Our merciful heavenly father is very patient. 2 Peter 3:9 says, *"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*

At the final judgment, all deeds will be examined by the Lord. It is appointed for everyone destined to die once, and after that to face judgment. For those who have trusted in their good works to save them instead of the Lord Jesus, they will face eternal torment in the Lake of Fire separated from God.

For the believer, we will stand before the Bema Seat and give an accounting of our life lived for the Lord. This will result in rewards and various crowns. Our salvation has already been settled when we trusted Christ.

Do you think Christians today have lost sight of the seriousness of sin?

What impact might a lesser view of sin and a diminished view of God's holiness have in our daily lives?

How might a biblical understanding of sin and its consequences prepare someone to grasp the need for salvation and appreciate the person and atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Sin is central in the story of humanity. It originated at the beginning. It is defined as missing the mark of God's glory by violating his law. It has been handed down to us by Adam. We would all be eternally condemned if it were not for the perfect work of Jesus Christ who died for sin to create a new race of the redeemed. In the end, all sin will be judged. Only those whose judgment has fallen instead on Christ will be saved.

This concludes our two lessons on the doctrine of Sin. Lessons 6 and 7 will focus on the doctrine of Salvation. These two lessons may be the most important lessons in our three courses doctrine series.