

Some Thoughts on the Nature of Sin

by Art Katz

The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing our sinfulness and the need for a revelation from God to understand our condition.

Scripture: Psalm 51:5, Isaiah 53:5, John 16:8, Romans 3:23, Romans 7:18, Galatians 6:7-8, Ephesians 2:1-3, Hebrews 9:26, 1 Peter 2:24, 1 John 3:4

Topics: "Divine Revelation", "Nature of Sin"

Description

Art Katz discusses the profound nature of sin, emphasizing that our sinful condition blinds us to our true state and necessitates an external revelation from God. He explains that sin is not merely a legal transgression but a deep affront to God's character and authority, encapsulated in His commandments. The crucifixion of Jesus serves as the ultimate revelation of sin's seriousness and God's judgment, highlighting the cost of our transgressions. Katz asserts that true understanding of ourselves and God comes from recognizing our total helplessness and the necessity of divine confrontation. Ultimately, he calls for a recognition of God's holiness and the gravity of sin as revealed through Christ's sacrifice.

Transcript

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As Karl Barth noted, "the very fact that we are sinners incapacitates us to recognizing ourselves as sinners." We are not in a position to estimate and evaluate our own condition. Therefore, if there is going to be any revelation and understanding of the truth of our condition, both as individuals and as a nation, then it has got to come from a source outside of our own subjectivity. We need categories that have not been ours, and they are not categories that a sinful man will naturally seek.

Sin is the transgression of the Law, but not in some narrow, legal sense of failing to comply with the legal requirements. The Law is the summation of God; it is what He is in His righteousness as is expressed through His ordinance and commandments. To transgress His commandments is to transgress God. We are not talking of simply running a red traffic light. A commandment is a statement of God, and it encapsulates all that God is--His mercy, goodness, wisdom, righteousness, etc. These are all caught up in

the words, "Thou shall not..." To disobey the Law's requirement is an astonishing affront against God; it is the repudiation of His authority.

For God to allow sin to go unrecognized, and for Him not to respond to it, renders Him 'non-God'--certainly not a God who is holy and righteous. It is not that He is an egotist requiring that recognition, but what would be the consequence for mankind if God were not God? And if man is going to see himself as a sinner, then something is required, namely, a confrontation with God as God in His majesty and awesome proportions. That revelation is alone contained and given at the crucifixion of Jesus, at the place where our unbelief refuses to consider it. It is there, in the depth of darkness and judgment, that the revelation of man as sinner is given.

One distinctive of sin is its ability to cover its own tracks. In other words, it does not reveal itself as sin, and that is how perverse the essence of sin is. That is also why it takes something from God to reveal the nature of sin, and if we reject that revelation, we will remain in an unhappy condition. God has employed the statement of His judgment as it was visited upon His own Son as being the revelation of the nature of sin. Sin deserves judgment, and that judgment found its victim in God's own Son. There is no way to know the exceeding sinfulness of sin except by the means required to expiate it, namely, what it cost God to requite it. Sin is everything calculated against God--in spirit, in tone, in attitude and disposition, and we indulge ourselves in unbelief to defiantly reject the character of God in the statement He has given concerning sin.

When we come to the utter, abject sense of total hopelessness, total futility and total helplessness of anything that we can effect in ourselves or by ourselves, then we have come and are coming to a deeper and truer knowledge of God and ourselves. If we want to know God, then we have got to know Him in His judgments. If we want to see His judgment, then look the Crucifixion of Jesus. That is God judging, and if we do not see God there, we do not see in any true way. If we have complaint about seeing God there, it is the testimony that what He says of our condition is true.

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