

# Fire Burns

by Erlo Stegen

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*The sermon emphasizes the dangers of sin, the importance of repentance, and the call to live a holy life, free from sin and temptation.*

**Duration:** 1:11:37

**Scripture:** Proverbs 6:20, Proverbs 6:27

**Topics:** "Warning"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the consequences of sin and the importance of repentance. He uses various illustrations to convey his message, including a painting of a man looking down the barrel of a gun, symbolizing the danger of gambling. The preacher also references King Solomon, who had many wives and concubines but realized the vanity of his actions at the end of his life. The sermon concludes with a plea for the audience to repent and seek forgiveness from God, as sin leads to eternal regret and separation from heaven.

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## Transcript

Let us pray. We thank you, Lord Jesus, that we have this opportunity again to meet at your feet. That we may sit as Mary sat at your feet.

And help us, Lord, that it may find place in our hearts, that everything else may be driven away, that we may truly be at your feet. Amen. We'll read from Proverbs.

Chapter 6. From verse 27. Can a man take fire to his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Today this question is put to us. Can you light a fire in your bosom and your clothes not be burned? In fact, if you light a fire in your bosom, not just your clothes will be burned, but you, your very self will be burned.

And that illustrates how sin also brings about death. I want to speak about sin. Sin is like a fire.

If you light a fire, you will be burned. If you do not light a fire, you will be burned. So Solomon, he is teaching us that we can't take sin and hide it within.

If you hide sin within, it will burn you and it will bring about death. In the Hebrew that word sarap means that you will be burned and it will burn you in a bad way. And it is used here in the same sense as if a house burns down.

In the Old Testament, this word is used a hundred and twenty times and it speaks of a fire, but in a negative sense where this fire will burn you, it will consume you, finish you off. And here Solomon is speaking about a sin that is hidden in your bosom, it's something which you are hiding, you're covering up. It's within you, you're hiding it there, you're covering it up, you're telling no one about it.

So here in this text, that fire refers to sin directly and it's that sin that's within you which you're hiding, covering up. And the most dominant sin in this sense, which you cover up and hide, is the sin of immorality, which you hide in your heart. So Solomon is directing this at young people about this sin that leads you to the wrong thing.

And into evil. So you hide it, it's in your heart, you think about it, but you tell no one about it. Solomon had a good upbringing, he was taught by his father and his mother and they warned him against that sin of immorality.

And here in this chapter, from verse 20 to 29, it speaks about it, about the evil woman. From verse 20 to 29. It speaks of that evil woman that's up to no good.

That type of woman where the eyes of the men follow her. Makes herself up and she tries to make her look in a way that the men will look at her. Now listen carefully, don't look at such a woman.

She's a danger, she'll tempt you to look at her. Be very aware of that. A woman who paints herself, makes herself up to try and, that she looks in a way that the men will, the eyes will follow her.

And the man who speaks about this is Solomon. Well one could say he had the right to speak about a woman because he was married to 700 princesses. And over and above that he still had 300 concubines.

And 1 Kings 11 verse 3 you can read about that. So in this illustration, in this portion, we are warned against the sin of immorality. So he got married to one princess after another.

And perhaps he thought well, it's his strategy to form alliances with other nations that they'll have peace in the nation. But that's something very risky, it's dangerous. That sin of immorality is an extreme danger.

And with that sin you will be punished, you will reap the rewards of it. And that sin comes in many different ways. Some even take the wife of their brother.

Or their neighbor's wife. And that will bring you at loggerheads with God. Never forget that your body is God's temple, the temple of the Holy Spirit.

So here he puts the question, can you light a fire in your bosom and you yourself and your clothes not be burned? And when that fire is within, it starts burning you, that's when that sin has entered you. And it would be better if you lit a literal fire in your bosom than if you light this fire of immorality, that fire from hell, if you light that within you. And that fire from hell is a million times worse than a literal fire.

So don't light that fire in your heart. And if you saw someone lighting a fire about to burn himself to death, you would say he's gone of his mind. And that fire will burn you, it will finish you off in body, soul, and spirit.

Sin leads to death, and it's not just normal death, it's eternal death. I think I've said enough about the sin of the flesh. And if this fire gets lit in your heart, even if you had life, you'll lose it and you'll end in that bottomless pit.

You will fall and fall for all eternity in hell. Now sin doesn't always come to you as something evil, looking evil. When the devil presents sin to you, he can also present it to you as something that looks very good.

He'll come as an angel of light. The devil can come to you in a very subtle and sly way, like underground, where no one notices him coming. He can enter through your thoughts, and it's through your thoughts that he'll start working at you and eventually destroy your whole life.

Be aware of it. Take note of what the Bible says, that you don't end up in hell. And then there are sins that don't look dangerous.

They don't look evil. In fact, they look quite harmless. You don't realize how harmful that thing is.

Some sins look so nice and so good. Do you hear a young person? It looks good, yet it's evil. Let me just share a story.

There was a family who had a little python. A small one, maybe a meter long. They reared this python as their pet, especially the eldest son in the family who lived upstairs, and he looked after that python there.

And he played with this python. It was his pet, and he enjoyed playing with it, and he fed it, and it grew. Later it was two, three, four meters long.

One day the parents decided to go and visit a certain place, and they went. When they returned, they saw a young man with a snake in his hand. So he was very happy after they had gone for a while, and they came back.

He wanted to see his pet snake, and he wanted to play with it. After a while, the father, the mother, the other children, they were all sitting at table ready to start their meal, and they noticed that the eldest son was missing. Then the brother remembered that he had run upstairs on their return to go up to see his pet and play with the snake.

So the brother ran upstairs and what did he find? What had happened, the brother, the eldest one, had run up and when the snake saw him, it got hold of him. And it, like a python does, had strangled this boy like it would a buck or even a person and then swallow them. The brother, of course, got a terrible shock when he found his eldest brother lying there dead, had been strangled by the snake.

And he had to go back and in huge shock tell the rest of the family that their pet python had killed their brother. The parents almost fainted. It was very traumatic, the whole experience, when they found how their pet snake had wrapped itself around the brother and crushed him to death.

This pet snake had been his friend. He had loved that snake. He loved its colors.

It was such a nice friend to have. But this friend killed him, crushed him to death in his own bedroom. You see, you boys and you men, remember this thing that you're hiding in your bosom, this thing that you love so much, will bring about your death.

It will burn you like that fire in your bosom. I'd like to illustrate it with different illustrations. There are many ships that have suffered shipwreck.

Probably the most famous shipwreck was the Titanic. This ship was famous all over, especially for the fact that it wouldn't sink. It was built in such a way, someone even commented and said, not even God could

sink this ship.

This ship was built in such a way that it wouldn't sink. This ship was built in such a way that it wouldn't sink. So at that time it was publicized all over via radio and newspaper that this ship would go on its first voyage in April 1912, crossing the oceans, even through ice-packed seas.

Then the rich and famous put up their hands, they said, they applied to go on its maiden voyage. Then the rich and famous put up their hands, they said, they applied to go on its maiden voyage. And as they were crossing this area with many icebergs, they struck one of these icebergs.

Because at the time, just at the time before it happened, there was a lot of joy on the ship and they were partying and joking and listening to music. They had effectively forgotten about God. This was a historic moment.

The biggest ship ever built, the smartest, most beautiful. No one had experienced anything like this before. But then after they struck that iceberg, the ship started tilting.

It started sinking. And as it started sinking lower and lower, eventually the captain also realized that he couldn't save the ship. As the ship was sinking, the water was flowing.

The dancing stopped, the joking stopped, the blaspheming stopped. Everyone became quiet and still. And then they started singing hymns.

There was no more laughing. Remember, if you just laugh things off, the day will come where you will stop laughing. And if you just always want to just enjoy yourself, that will also stop one day.

You just want to enjoy yourself. You just want to laugh all the time. But God is warning you, that day will come where you will stop doing that.

And that ship sank and many died with it. It was a huge ship, 900 feet long. 300 feet.

The Titanic was 900 feet. But then they say it struck an ice rock and cut the ship 300 feet. That was the end of the Titanic.

That was in April 1912. In 1985. In 1985.

For years people wondered what was the actual cause that the Titanic sank. And so many years later, in 1985, they sent divers down into those depths. Two and a half miles.

They found the wreck two and a half miles down. August 1995. A group, an international team of scientists and engineers.

They were out to find out the real cause that the Titanic sank. Of course, by this time, the wreck was covered by a lot of mud. And that prevented them from getting into the wreck.

And especially they wanted to find out where that ice had cut into the wreck. That's how hard ice can get. And they especially wanted to see where the ship had been cut.

This 300 feet or approximately 100 meter gash in the side of the ship. And they had specialist equipment to see exactly what the cause was. And when they really started investigating closely, they found that in fact the problem wasn't across the 300 feet but only 12 to 13 feet.

Just imagine. Such a small thing. Such a small hole.

And they all drowned. Except for a few that were saved by the lifeboats. They were all saved by the lifeboats.

They thought it was 300 feet, a cut that had caused all this. All the time it was just about 12 or 13 feet. You see, that's what sin is like.

Just a small thing. Only 12 to 13 feet. It's only 12 feet.

Don't mess around with sin. Even if you think it's a small thing, it's a small sin. You'll end up in hell because of it.

Sin of any size will sink your life. Will sink you. Any sin, no matter how small it is, will sink you forever.

And you're hell bound. That's where you drown. Your enjoyment will stop.

You're dancing, you're flirting around with girls. In an instant, it will be over. And you'll enter hell with your girlfriend.

Zio Pela Ngumzus. Putrineshokwin. And don't comfort yourself and say, well I don't do any big sin.

I'm careful. I don't get involved in any big wrong things. But remember, it's small things that destroy you.

Many people have been destroyed by those things which they deemed small. Small sins. But they ended on the rocks because of it.

Just committing small sins. You say it's so small. Enjoyable.

You'll wake up with a bump one day when you try to stop it and you can't. And God dams you forever. And maybe you'll say, well I didn't do anything harmful to her.

I didn't rape her. We were just chatting. But it's those small things that will lead you to hell.

And it all begins with a few impure thoughts. But it will grow. That small thing grows and grows.

Eventually you die in your sin. Now excuse me. I did say I want to use different illustrations.

In 1982. They had a painting competition. And when one of the artists, when one of the artist's paintings was presented, it was a chair and there was a big gun.

And someone sitting there looking down the barrel of the gun. And so many people came to look at this painting of this man sitting on the chair looking down the barrel of the gun. Well that's like gambling where you can get away with it sometimes.

Or gambling where you can win something some of the time but you lose most of the time. And so it is when you sit there looking down the barrel of a gun. And then they said well this gun only fires once in a hundred years.

So it's quite safe. If only once in a hundred years that thing can explode. Now you may say well what's the chance then? Once in a hundred years.

But it could be that day or the next day as you're looking down the barrel. You can live for another hundred years. Woe to you.

They are full of bullets inside. And that thing can shoot at any time. Another artist in his painting tried to depict temptation.

And so his painting was around temptation where someone was tempted by sin by the world. Tempted by money. Trying to do something to make lots of money.

And the Bible teaches that temptation is when something is presented to you and you fall for that temptation. You may say oh it's God who tempted me. You are not tempted by God.

He doesn't tempt anybody. You are tempted by your own flesh. Your lusts they draw you in.

Drag you into it. It's your own desires. Those desires, your own desires that lure you and attract you to the things of the devil.

So beware. Because sin can look so attractive it draws you. But if you give in to the lusts of the flesh that will result in death.

And remember never to say God has tempted you. It's your own desires that have caused you to sin. And that's the path of the wicked.

These lusts of the flesh, that fire within will make you fall into gross sin. And that you will leave the righteous way, the right way. That's the demographic rule.

If you're driving on a road, stay on the right side. Not the right side like overseas. But here on the left side.

That's the right side. If you leave the right side, woe to you. You'll die.

That's what sin is like. No matter how sweet. How precious.

Maybe something you just love doing. You enjoy doing it. That won't just bring about your death here in this world.

But even in the world to come. Every day we must test and prove ourselves. Whether it's all right inside.

Whether there is not some strange fire that caught into me. If you don't do this, it will become your pet sin. And eventually it will kill you.

Woe to you if you just take sin lightly. Because even that sin which you regard as something small. That sin, if you don't deal with it, it will kill you.

No matter how sweet. Sin may appeal to you. It may look so sweet.

Never defend it. Because in the end, it will kill you. James says, Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed.

And never say like some people do. That it's God who has tempted them. God doesn't tempt you.

It's that evil within you that's tempting you. I don't know why it happened. It came so unexpectedly.

I don't know why it happened. I didn't see any danger in it. But it's because of your own lust.

It's because of that hellish fire that's within you. That's burning within, as Solomon said. Sin never will bring life to you.

It will always bring death. You as are near to hear, let him hear. Sin, that which is wrong, will bring life to you, but only bring death.

And you watch and pray, lest that death is not just the death of a person here, but eternal death. In Kumbulu Chakope, 1 verse 14, Remember James 1 verse 14, that if you are tempted, you are tempted and drawn by your own evil desires. And then that temptation brings birth to sin.

And you end in death. If you are tempted and you give in to that temptation, that bears sin in your life. Before Solomon died, he realized how he had fallen as a result of these women.

He had 700 wives, plus 300 concubines. But at the end of his life, he realized the vanity of what he had done, that it had been in vain. I don't know whether you understand, you boys, you men, you girls, you women, do you understand? But if you can't hear, you'll regret it in heaven.

You can't go to heaven if you don't keep God's words and listen to it and do what he tells you. Rather cry out to God, that he may forgive you, and that you say, Oh Lord, forgive me for my sin, for I've heard that the wages of sin is death. If you don't repent, you'll regret it for all eternity.

You're not going to heaven, you're going to hell. No sin leads you to heaven, it leads you to hell. No matter how sweet that sin looks and how harmless it looks, you'll regret it if you persevere with it.

Let us stand and pray together. That's just for those who can stand. If you can't, you can remain seated.

Oh God, we pray that these words will not be in vain to us. That we will not go out here and light that fire in our bosom that will burn not just our clothing but our very selves. That even if a girl comes and makes herself up to catch our attention, help us that our eyes will not follow her.

Help us, Lord, that the lusts of the flesh will not rule in our lives, in fact, find no place in our lives. Grant us, Lord, a spirit of repentance, of godly sorrow that will call out to you to help us. Amen.

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