

Sin in the Flesh

by Harmon A. Baldwin

The sermon emphasizes that sin is not located in the physical body, but in the heart and soul, and that faith is the key to pleasing God.

Scripture: Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 15:19, Romans 8:8-9, Ephesians 6:6, Colossians 3:2, Hebrews 11:5-6, James 3:14

Topics: "Sin Nature", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Harmon A. Baldwin delves into the misconception that sin lies in the flesh, akin to the old Manichaeian heresy, emphasizing that the physical body itself is not sinful but rather the heart where sin resides, influencing our choices and affections. He clarifies that sin enters when the soul succumbs to fleshly desires, leading to bondage and a worldly mindset. Baldwin highlights the importance of faith in pleasing God, as stated in Hebrews 11:6, and the presence of the Spirit within believers, as mentioned in Romans 8:9, guiding them away from minding the flesh and towards spiritual growth.

Transcript

Sin is in the flesh and as long as we are in the flesh we cannot please God. This is a re-statement in modern form of the old Manichaeian heresy, which flourished in the second half of the Third century. The morality of Manichaeism, according to Dr. Schaff, was "based on the fundamental error of the intrinsic evil of matter and the body * * * Their great moral aim was to become unworldly in the Buddhistic sense; to renounce and destroy corporeity; to set the good soul free from the fetters of matter."

The meaning of the word flesh in the Bible gradually shades off from a physical through an ethical to a metaphysical sense. The idea of essential sin as lying in the physical body cannot be found in the Word of God. The corporeal flesh is not sinful. It is simply a material organism composed of various chemical elements, which elements can all, without exception, be found elsewhere in nature, but to this corporeal substance is added, in the living man, the interior and exterior organisms of the senses; by the union of the flesh with the spirit it becomes possible to conceive ideas, sensations, desires, and this union contains the faculties of the soul with their divers functions. Without the additions of the spirit, the flesh is a dead substance, incapable of any activity whatever. (See Eccl. 9:10). According to the Scriptures sin is in the heart (See Jer. 17:9; Matt. 15:19; Jas. 3:14), the center of our personality, in which all the influences, good and bad, meet, and the choice is made between them. (See Dan. 1:8; Eph. 6:6). The heart is the seat of spiritual affections and here resides the powers of discrimination and choice. (See Prov. 4:23; 23:7; Eccl. 8:5). Hence, heart sin is a perversion of the affections (Col. 3:2), and actual sin is a misdirecting of the will

toward that which is denied or which is contrary to obedience.

In the human body in common with the beast are appetites, desires and aversions. The proper gratification of any one of these does not constitute sin. But sin enters when the soul which should be master is brought under and made the follower of fleshly desires. This is part of the bondage mentioned in the seventh chapter of Romans.

Then the corporeal flesh is not sin, neither are fleshly desires sin, but the choice of the lowest or animal man is sin and makes one worldly, sensual, devilish.

The flesh spoken of in the passage so often quoted, "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Rom. 8:8) is not the corporeal body, else Enoch would have been as desperately situated as we, but the Bible says that "before his translation (even while he was here in the flesh) he had this testimony that he pleased God." -- Heb. 11:5.

As to whether it is possible for us while in this life to please God, the Bible makes clear when it says that without faith it is not possible to please God (Heb. 11:6), leaving the inevitable inference that he that has faith does please God. This is the ground of Enoch's success and also of ours.

But people who quote this passage about the flesh almost invariably fail to see the very next sentence, which reads, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." Even the Westminster Confession declares that regenerated persons have the Spirit in their hearts; and a better authority than that declares, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his." -- Rom. 8:9.

Minding the flesh is choosing the lowest that is in man, excluding the spiritual for the sake of the earthly, either the vicious or the so-called lesser sins.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/harmon-a-baldwin/sin-in-the-flesh/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net