

Sin in the Minister

by John Newton

The sermon emphasizes the ongoing struggle with sin in the lives of believers, including ministers, and the importance of humility and reliance on God's grace.

Scripture: Psalm 103:14, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 6:14, Romans 7:21, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, Ephesians 6:12, Hebrews 4:16, 1 John 2:1

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Christian Humility"

Description

John Newton preaches about the universal sinful nature of mankind, even for those who have experienced God's grace, emphasizing the ongoing battle against sin while finding hope and strength in Jesus as our Savior, Righteousness, Advocate, and Shepherd. He encourages humility, godly sorrow, and self-abasement, while also rejoicing in the Lord's mercy and grace that overrules sin for His glory. As ministers, he highlights the importance of sharing from personal experiences to help and encourage others, acknowledging the constant need for God's strength and guidance in the midst of spiritual warfare.

Transcript

June 13, 1772.

My Dear Sir,

You say that your experience agrees with mine. It must be so, because our hearts are alike. The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, destitute of good, and prone to evil. This is the character of mankind universally, and those who are made partakers of grace are renewed but in part; the evil nature still cleaves to them, and the root of sin, though mortified, is far from being dead.-While the cause remains, it will have effects; and while we are burdened with the body of this death, we must groan under it. But we need not be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow, since we have in Jesus a Saviour, a Righteousness, an Advocate, a Shepherd. "He knows our frame, and remembers that we are but dust." If sin abounds in us, grace abounds much more in Him; nor would He suffer sin to remain in His people, if He did not know how to overrule it, and make it an occasion of endearing His love and grace so much the more to their souls. The Lord forbid that we should plead His goodness as an encouragement to sloth and indifference. Humiliation, godly sorrow, and self-abasement become us; but, at the same time, we may rejoice in the Lord. Though sin remains, it shall not have dominion over us; though it wars in us, it shall not prevail against us. We have a mercy-seat sprinkled with blood, we have an Advocate with the Father, we are called to this warfare, and we fight under the eye of the Captain of our salvation, who is always near to

renew our strength, to heal our wounds, and to cover our heads in the heat of battle. As ministers, we preach to those who have like passions and infirmities with ourselves, and by our own feelings, fears, and changes, we learn to speak a word in season to them that are weary, to warn those who stand, and to stretch out a hand of compassion towards them that are fallen; and to commend it to others from our own experience, as a faithful saying. Besides, if the Lord is pleased to give us some liberty, acceptance, and success in preaching the Gospel, we should be in great danger of running mad with spiritual pride, if the Lord did not permit us to feel the depravity and vileness of our hearts, and thereby keep us from forgetting what we are in ourselves.

With regard to your young people, you must expect to meet with some disappointment. Perhaps, not every one of whom you have conceived hopes will stand, and some who do belong to the Lord are permitted to make sad mistakes for their future humiliation. It is our part to watch, warn, and admonish, and we ought, likewise, to be concerned for those slips and miscarriages which we cannot prevent. A minister, if faithful, and of a right spirit, can have no greater joy than to see his people walking honourably and steadily in the truth; and hardly anything will give him more sensible grief, than to see any of them taken in Satan's wiles. Yet still the Gospel brings relief here. He is wiser than we are, and knows how to make those things subservient to promote his work, which we ought to guard against as evils and hindrances. We are to use the means-He is to rule the whole. If the faults of some are made warnings to others, and prove, in the end, occasions of illustrating the riches of divine grace, this should reconcile us to what we cannot help, though such considerations should not slacken our diligence in sounding an alarm, and reminding our hearers of their continual danger.

I am, &c.

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