

Christ's Own Definition of Sin.

by M.L. Dye

Jesus taught that sin involves a willful rejection of light, and that mistakes are not the same as sin.

Scripture: Matthew 5:28, Matthew 5:48, Luke 22:28, John 3:19, John 7:16, John 12:49, John 15:22, Hebrews 4:15, 1 John 1:7

Topics: "Sin And Repentance", "Conscious Rebellion"

Description

M.L. Dye preaches on the definition of sin according to Jesus Christ, emphasizing that temptation and mistakes are not sin, but willful rejection of light is. Jesus taught that sin involves consciously choosing evil over good, rejecting the truth even when it is known. The sermon delves into the importance of understanding the difference between sin and mistakes, highlighting the need for repentance and the consequences of unrepented sin.

Transcript

The Greek Philosopher, Plato, said, "If you would converse with me, please, first, define your terms." We are told that one of the first marks of intelligence is the ability to distinguish between things that are different. Before we further consider what our Savior taught about sin, let us see how the Son of God defined that term. Let us look at sin, and see what it is not, and what it is, as revealed by the language of Christ. For surely as Jesus defines sins, so our Heavenly Father defines it. For Jesus said, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His Who sent Me (John 7:16)."

In defining sin we shall note there are three important facts which Jesus taught.

Fact No. 1

CHRIST TAUGHT THAT TEMPTATION IS NOT SIN

For forty days and forty nights Jesus was constantly tempted by Satan in the wilderness. Yet never once did He yield to the tempter. Later after spending some time in His ministry He said to His disciples, "Ye are they who have continued with Me in My temptation" (Luke 22:28). Jesus thus describes His very life on earth as a period of temptations. Yet, challenging His enemies, He said, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin (John 8:46) Jesus never sinned, because He never yielded to temptation. So the writer of the book of Hebrews could truthfully say. "He was in all points tempted like as we are yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). "Though tempted every day," one has said, "Jesus boldly faced all His present and future enemies in the

absolute certainty of His spotless purity before God and man."

It should be remembered then that temptation is not sin---but only an opportunity to do either right or wrong-- to choose either virtue or evil--to serve either God or Satan. The birds that fly over our heads cannot be controlled by us. But to let them build a nest in our hair quite another thing.

Fact No. 2

JESUS TAUGHT THAT MISTAKES ARE NOT SIN

Speaking of those who hate and persecute both Him and His disciples, Jesus said, "If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin but now they have no cloak for their sin...If I had not done among them the works that none other man did they had not had sin but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (John 15:22 and 24).

In other words, "If these haters and opposers had not seen Me raise the dead and heal blind eyes and lepers and lame, theirs would be only a mistake. But now, having seen the evidence of My Deity---having seen the proof of My connection with God--having seen My Words confirmed by miracles which only the Father could perform, now they know better and therefore are sinning." Thus Jesus in this discourse, distinctly teaches that mistakes are not sin.

Again in John 9:41 this great moral principle is reaffirmed Jesus declares to compromising religious leaders, "If ye are blind, ye should have sin; but because ye say we see, therefore your sin remaineth." To these religious pretenders--these "blind leaders of the blind"--these "whited sepulchers"--these "wolves in sheep's clothing", Jesus said, "Had ye believed Moses ye would have believed Me, for He wrote of Me." Without walking in the Light which they had, they yet claimed to be enlightened, but Jesus said because they knew better--but did not do better--therefore their sin remained.

Having noted that temptation is not sin and mistakes are not sin and that the willing heart will receive added light let us look now at what sin is.

Fact No. 3

JESUS TAUGHT THAT SIN ALWAYS INVOLVES A WILLFUL REJECTION OF LIGHT

We have already seen in John 15:24 how Jesus taught that sin consists in doing wrong when we know better. Christ taught that even the Pharisees, in rejecting Him, would not have been sinning if they had no proof of His divinity. Christ repeatedly taught that wherever sin is involved, there is rejection of light. For example in John the third chapter, Jesus explained clearly what He means by sin, and what God considers as sin. Many know by heart John 3:16, but few seem to have noticed the clear teaching which follows the sixteenth verse. We shall quote Jesus' words from verse 18 onward. "He that believeth on Him is not condemned. But he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the Name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation (or this is the reason for condemnation) that Light is come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than Light." (Note carefully) "For every one that doeth evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

Observe that Christ here emphasizes that only such as turn away from all evil are truly believing Him.

"But he that doeth Truth cometh to the Light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." The Amplified version makes this more clear: He who practices Truth--who does what is right--comes out into the Light, so that his works may be plainly shown to be what they are, wrought in God --divinely prompted--done with God's help. Note how this agrees with the statement of John the beloved disciple: "If we walk in the Light as He is in the Light we have fellowship one with another and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleaseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Please note that the above statement of Christ also implies that mistakes are not sin. Because of the widespread misunderstanding and confusion on this particular point, let us re-emphasize that mistakes are made because of lack of light, whereas sin always involves the willful rejection of light. Even in the "sins of ignorance" of the Old Testament those responsible to inform Israel of God's laws were personally guilty, in their failure to do so.

Some have quickly remarked, "Why then inform the heathen?" The answer is that even the heathen do have a conscience and do fail to walk in its light; though without the Gospel, that light is limited. For the Gospel is a double blessing--both adding to the light of conscience, and motivating obedience.

In proceeding paragraphs we have considered four statements of Jesus Christ all of which lead to a conclusion that sins are not mistakes and mistakes are not sins. (a--John 9:41; b--John 3:19-21; c--John 15:22 and d--John 15:24). It is important to carefully study these passages.

I submit that 99 out of 100 people who read these passages the first time and without bias will understand from them that sin is relative to light; that sin never occurs without a conscious and willful choice of evil. Wherever Jesus spoke of sin this moral principle was clearly implied or plainly taught.

A copy of my manuscript on Sin was sent to Dr. George Lamsa, who is widely known as the world's foremost authority on the Aramaic language, the language which Christ spoke. After reading the manuscript, Dr. Lamsa stated in his reply: Sin does separate us from God---Repent in Aramaic means do not sin again--Mistakes are not sin---No one can be forgiven without repentance---When a sinner repents he is no longer a slave to sin and Satan.

AN ILLUSTRATION

When our son was two years old he followed his mother out to the porch on morning as she went to bring in the milk left by the milkman. Seeing his mother take a quart in each hand, he tried to do the same. As he followed her in, one quart slipped from his little fingers, and of course, the result was a milky splash on the front room rug.

The results were bad, indeed but certainly the child was not sinning, and of course, he should not be punished because he was doing his best according to his light and understanding. He only made a mistake. We have known some really good people who accused themselves of sinning when in Heaven's sight they had only made a mistake. As long as the heart stays right we are not sinning, even though the head lacks information. No mere man is perfect in knowledge, though any mortal man can be perfect in heart. This is what Jesus meant when He said, Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect (Matt 5:48)

Many accuse themselves of sinning when they have only been tempted to sin---but have not yielded to the temptation. The familiar song says, "Yield not to temptation for yielding is sin." Of course, if one is tempted

and yields to the temptation enough to entertain the will to do it, when he knows it is evil, he is then sinning in thought.

The Lord Jesus illustrates this by saying, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her" (an illicit, deliberate looking with the purpose of lusting) "hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt 5:28).

Here it should be remembered the thought of sin was deliberately entertained---and the looking was done with the purpose of lusting. For "looketh to lust" are the words of Jesus.

It is well to note that in the verse following the one we have quoted, is the very place where Jesus introduces one of his strongest statements about sin; for He follows this thought of "looking to lust," with the words, "If thy right eye offend thee or if your right eye serves as a trap to ensnare you" or "is an occasion for you to stumble and sin, pluck it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one of your members than that your whole body be cast into Hell. And if your right hand serves as a trap to ensnare you or is an occasion for you stumble and sin cut it off and cast it from you. It is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body should be cast into Hell." (Amplified New Testament---Matt 5:29 and 30).

The Son of God from Heaven thus informs us that if any part of our body would actually force us to sin we had better literally tear it off from our body because sin, unrepented, is fatal to the soul. But when we honestly face this matter, we all know that if we try even half that hard to keep from sinning, we will not sin!

How these words of our Savior do clash and contrast with the "free-and-easy-believing-and-living-in-sin" theories often taught in religious circles today. Yet Jesus said, "The Father Who sent Me has Himself given Me orders what to say--so whatever I speak, I am saying exactly what My Father has told Me to say, and in accordance with His instructions" (John 12:49 and 50--Amplified N.T.)

Faithfulness in declaring what Jesus taught on the sin question would go a long way toward solving the problems of broken homes and unwed mothers, which are facing many pastors today. Our pastor in a major denomination told the writer that among the people of his church alone more than a dozen babies had been born out of wedlock. Surely in Heaven's sight it is high time to re-examine this all-important issue, and return to teaching exactly what our Savior taught!

What a horrible shock will come to multitudes in the Day of Judgment--multitudes who now profess the Name of Christ, but day unto day are living in known sin---yes--guilty of unrepented sin!

Remember, dear reader these words of Jesus "are Spirit and Life" and He said, "Though Heaven and earth shall pass away my words shall never pass away" but "shall judge in the Last Day" those who hear them. His words have exactly the authority as though Christ in His physical Presence were standing before you now. Indeed, He is "with you always" and is at this moment intently watching and reaction to his own Words.

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