

The Mischief of Sin

by Thomas Watson

Thomas Watson's sermon explores the mischief of sin, highlighting its consequences and the transformative power of God's mercy through repentance.

Scripture: Exodus 16:31, Job 15:16, Psalm 39:9, Proverbs 8:13, Jeremiah 23:24, Romans 2:5, Ephesians 2:4, Colossians 3:5, 1 Timothy 1:13, 1 John 1:7, Revelation 16:9, Revelation 21:27

Topics: "Sin And Consequences", "Repentance And Mercy"

Description

Thomas Watson preaches about the mischief of sin, highlighting God's mercy in saving Christians from persisting in sin and the consequences of unrepentant sinners storing up wrath for themselves. He emphasizes the destructive nature of sin, its link to punishment, and the need to avoid pride, covetousness, and immorality. Watson also discusses the cleansing power of Christ's blood, the importance of repentance, and the eternal consequences of sin. He urges believers to use the Word of God, prayer, and mortification to overcome sin and emphasizes the need to fear the consequences of sin and avoid secret sins that lead to destruction.

Transcript

The Mischief of Sin

by Thomas Watson, 1671

CHOICE EXCERPTS

When you were marching to hell!

"Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy." 1 Timothy 1:13

Literally, "I was bemercied." Christians, why might not you have been in the number of those who persist in sinning? Because God has bemiracled you with mercy!

See what cause you have to admire the stupendous goodness of God, who has wrought a change in you --and checked you in your full career of sin!

Christians, you who are vessels of election--were by nature as wicked as others--but God had compassion on you and plucked you as brands out of the fire! He stopped you in your course of sinning--when you were marching to hell! He turned you back to Him by sincere repentance. Oh, here is the banner of love displayed over you!

Behold sovereign grace! Let your hearts melt in love to God. Admire His royal bounty. Set the crown of all your praises, upon the head of free grace! "By the grace of God I am what I am!" 1 Corinthians 15:10

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Another stick to heat hell

See what vast treasures of wrath are laid up for unrepentant sinners. "Because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when His righteous judgment will be revealed."

Romans 2:5

As guilt increases--so does wrath. Every sin committed, is another stick to heat hell--and make it burn the hotter!

It is a thing to be lamented--that men should live in the world, only to increase their torments in hell. While they commit new sins, they are burdening themselves with more iron chains, which will be so heavy at last, that

they will not be able to bear them--or avoid them.

Oh, sinner! Know that for every sin, you are only adding
to your torment! Every dish Satan serves you--will
only increase your fatal reckoning, and make your
condemnation heavier.

Every sin is a drop of oil upon hell's eternal furnace!

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Linked together with adamantine chains!

Sin is the womb of sorrow--and the grave of
comfort! Sin turns the body into a hospital.

It causes fevers, ulcers, and cancers.

Sin is the Trojan horse, out of which a
whole troop of afflictions come.

Sin drowned the old world, and burnt Sodom.

Sin and punishment are linked together with
adamantine chains! Sin as naturally draws
punishment to it--as the magnet draws iron!

Sin is a coal which not only blackens--but burns!

Sin draws hell at its heels. "The wicked shall
be turned into hell." Psalm 9:7

Sin lays men low in the grave, and in
hell too--without repentance.

Sin first tempts--and then damns!

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They tempt the devil to fall in love with them!

"I hate pride and arrogance." Proverbs 8:13

Pride runs in the blood.

Augustine calls pride, "the mother of all sin!"

Some people would be better--if they could
pluck the worm of pride out of their head!

Pride ruins our virtues--and poisons our mercies.

Some are proud of their estates. Riches are fuel for
pride. Ezekiel 28:5, "Your heart has become proud
because of your wealth." Men's hearts rise with their
estates.

Some take pride in their abilities. The Lord enriches
them with wit and talents--and pride fumes from
their heart into their head--and makes them giddy.

Some are proud of their bodies. Pride is seen in
long and meticulous dressings. They spend that
time between the comb and the looking-glass,
which should be spent in prayer and holy meditation.

Pride is seen in painting their faces--overlaying God's
work with the devil's colors! But virtue is most beautiful
to God. "Don't be concerned about the outward beauty
that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or
beautiful clothes. You should be known for the beauty
that comes from within--the unfading beauty of a gentle
and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God." 1 Pet. 3:3-4

Pride is seen in the outlandish fashions with which some
people dress--or rather disguise themselves. They clothe
themselves like the rainbow. Adam was ashamed of his
nakedness; these should be ashamed of their clothing.

They are so plumed and gaudily attired--that they

tempt the devil to fall in love with them!

"The Lord detests all the proud of heart! Be sure of this--They will not go unpunished!" Proverbs 16:5

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The devils are scrambling for his soul!

"Covetousness, which is idolatry." Colossians 3:5

Covetousness is the cancer of the soul.

Covetousness is a key which opens the door to further wickedness. 1 Timothy 6:10, "For the love of money is at the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows!"

And what is one the better for all his wealth--at death?

1 Timothy 6:10, "We brought nothing into the world--and it is certain that we can carry nothing out." When the rich miser dies--what scrambling is there!

His friends are scrambling for his money!

The worms are scrambling for his body!

The devils are scrambling for his soul!

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Milk-white!

"The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all our sin!"

1 John 1:7

Christ's blood is a CLEANSING blood.

As the merit of Christ's blood pacifies God--so the virtue of it purifies us. Christ's blood is heaven's bath.

It is a laver to wash in. It washes a crimson sinner--

milk-white!

The Word of God is a looking-glass to show us our spots--and the blood of Christ is a fountain to wash them away! "On that day a fountain will be opened --to cleanse them from all their sins and defilement!"

Zechariah 13:1

But this blood will not wash--if it is mingled with anything. If we mingle our good works with Christ's blood--it will not wash. Let Christ's blood be pure and unmixed--and there is no spot which it cannot wash away! It purged out Noah's drunkenness--and Lot's incest!

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Make us 'clods of earth' into 'stars of glory'

Christ is that golden pipe--through which the golden oil of salvation is transmitted to us.

"Because of His great love that He had for us" Ephesians 2:4

Nothing could fasten Jesus to the cross--but the golden link of love!

The emperor Trajan tore off a piece of his own robe to bind up one of his soldier's wounds. But Christ tore off His own flesh for us!

"He gave Himself for us to redeem us." Titus 2:14. Christ gave Himself for us--what more could He give? If He had anything to part with of more worth--He would have bestowed it upon us!

What astonishing love--that Christ should die for such as we are.

What are we? Not only vanity--but enmity!

When we were rebelling--He was dying! When we had weapons in our hands--then He had the spear in His side! This is the very

quintessence of love! "God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us!" Romans 5:8. When we were engulfed in misery and had lost our beauty--then Christ died for us. O amazing love, which should swallow up all our thoughts!

What astonishing love--that Christ should die for us--rather than for the fallen angels. They were creatures of a more noble extraction and, in all probability, might have brought greater revenues of glory to God. Yet, that Christ should pass by those golden vessels, and make us 'clods of earth' into 'stars of glory'--O the hyperbole of Christ's love!

What a stupendous love is this!

Who can meditate upon His love--and not be in ecstasy!

We may behold the odiousness of sin--in the red looking-glass of Christ's sufferings. Sin is to be abominated, since it turned Adam out of paradise and threw the angels down to hell. Sin is the birthplace of our sorrows--and the grave of our comforts. But that which may most of all disfigure the face of sin and make it appear abominable is this--It crucified our Lord Jesus!

O let us look upon sin with indignation! When a temptation to sin comes--let us say, "Is not this the sin which poured out Christ's blood!" Let our hearts be enraged against sin!

When the senators of Rome showed the people Caesar's bloody robe, they were incensed against those who slew him. Sin has rent the white robe of Christ's flesh--and died it a crimson color!

Let us, then, seek to be avenged of our sins!

Under the Law, if an ox gored a man so that he died--the ox

was to be killed, Exodus 21:28. Sin has gored and pierced our Savior! Let it die!

Let us be deeply affected with the great love of Christ for us.

Who can tread upon these hot coals--and his heart not burn?

Cry out with Ignatius, "Christ, my love, is crucified!"

If a friend would die for us--would not our hearts be much affected with his kindness? That the God of heaven would die for us--how should this stupendous mercy have a melting influence upon us! The body of Christ broken--is enough to break the most flinty heart. At our Savior's passion, "the rocks split apart!" He who is not affected with Christ's love --has a heart harder than the rocks!

How should we be affected with Christ's kindness who, to spare our life--lost His own! Let us pray that, as Christ was fastened to the cross--so He may be fastened to our hearts! "May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it!" Ephesians 3:19

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The fire will make them forget the pleasure!

"Lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."

2 Timothy 3:4

"Reveling in their pleasures." 2 Peter 2:13

"They actually rejoice in doing evil!" Jerem. 11:15

It is worse to love sin--than to commit it. He who loves sin--his heart is in the sin. He follows it with delight--like a man hunts his game.

Sinners say they hate the devil--but they love that

which will bring them to the devil! Lovers of sin shall have more of hell torment. The fire will make them forget the pleasure! Oh, who would, for a cup of pleasure, drink a sea of wrath! "Don't be deceived: God is not mocked. For whatever a man sows he will also reap." Galatians 6:7

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A private back door to hell

"Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth? declares the Lord." Jeremiah 23:24

Let me not only speak to scandalous sinners, who seem to have 'damnation' written upon their foreheads--but to secret sinners.

"Cursed is he who makes an idol and puts it in a secret place." Deuteronomy 27:15. Some of the Jews would not be seen openly bowing to an idol--but they would put it in their closet or some other secret place and there worship it.

There are many in like manner who will not sin on the balcony, or be like Absalom and sin in the sight of all Israel, 2 Samuel 16:22.

But they shut up their windows, and commit their sin in secret. They have a private back door to hell--which nobody knows of!

Perhaps they live in secret adultery, or secret envy and malice, or secret neglect of duty. God

knows that they are living in secret sins. What an aggravation of sin is this! These desperate, heaven-daring sinners, though they see the flaming sword of God's justice before them, resolvedly venture on in sin!

"I have been watching!" declares the Lord.

Jeremiah 7:11

"I have seen your detestable acts! Woe to you!

How long will you be unclean?" Jeremiah 13:27

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A never-dying appetite for sin

"They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify Him. Men gnawed their tongues in agony and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done." Revelation 16:9, 11

If men would men live forever--they would sin forever.

Some think it harsh that for the sins committed in a few years--they should undergo eternal torment. But here lies the justice and equity of it--it is because sinners have an everlasting principle of sin in them. Their stock of corruption is never spent. They have a never-dying appetite for sin--which is justly punished with a never-dying worm! "Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched!" Mark 9:44

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They commit their filthy sins against Him!

"In spite of all this, they kept on sinning!" Psalm 78:32

See the sordid ingratitude of sinners. Notwithstanding the fact that they had such eminent and signal favors from God--the pillar of fire to lead them, the rock split to give them water--yet God's mercy could not, with all its oratory, prevail with them to leave their iniquities. "They kept on sinning!"

God would draw men from sin by His mercies--yet they will indulge their lusts. Oh, how ungrateful! It is an ill nature--which will not be won with love. Beasts are wrought upon with kindness, Isaiah 1:3--but sinners are not! The wicked are worse for God's mercies! They, like vultures--draw sickness from these perfumes!

The wicked deal with God as we do with the Thames.

The Thames brings us in our riches--our gold, silks and spices--and we throw all our filth into the Thames.

Just so do the wicked deal with God. He gives them all their mercies--and they commit their filthy sins against Him! "They kept on sinning!"

If mercy is not a magnet to draw us nearer to God--it will be a millstone to sink us deeper into hell. Nothing is so cold as lead--yet nothing is more scalding when it is melted. Nothing is so sweet as God's mercy--yet nothing is so dreadful, when it is abused!

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Take these three spears

Do with your sin--as Joab did with Absalom.

He took three spears and thrust them through
the heart of Absalom! 2 Samuel 18:14

Take these three spears--the Word of God,
prayer, and mortification--and strike through
the heart of your lusts, so that they die!

What is the end of all a Christian's duties, praying,
and hearing--but to weaken and mortify lust!

Why is this spiritual medicine taken--but to kill
the child of sin! Sin will insinuate itself and plead
for a reprieve--but show it no mercy!

Saul's sparing Agag lost him the kingdom--and
your sparing sin will lose you the kingdom of heaven.

Do with your sin, what Samuel did to Agag, "He
hacked Agag to pieces before the Lord at Gilgal."

1 Samuel 15:33.

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Nothing will convince them

If we could see hell-fire in every sin--it would
make us fear to commit it! The fiercest creatures
dread fire. When Moses' rod was turned into a
serpent, he was afraid and fled from it. Sin will
prove to be a stinging serpent. Oh, fly from it!
Most people are like the leviathin--a creature
devoid of fear, Job 41:33. They play upon the
hole of the asp. Sinners never fear hell--until
they feel hell! Nothing will convince them

--but fire and brimstone!

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A shortcut to hell!

The unchaste heart is a volcano--burning with lust!

Immorality is the shipwreck of chastity--and the murder of conscience.

Immorality is a brutish sin. "They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for another man's wife." Jeremiah 5:8

Immorality is a costly sin; it proves a purgatory to the purse. Proverbs 6:26, "The prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life." "You will lose your honor and hand over to merciless people everything you have achieved in life.

Strangers will obtain your wealth, and someone else will enjoy the fruit of your labor. Afterward you will groan in anguish when disease consumes your body!"

Proverbs 5:9-11

Immorality is a foolish sin. Proverbs 5:20. "The man who commits adultery is an utter fool, for he destroys his own soul!" Proverbs 6:32

The immoral person hastens his own death. "She seduces him with her persistent pleading; she lures with her flattering talk. He follows her impulsively like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer bounding toward a trap until an arrow pierces its liver, like a bird darting into a snare--he doesn't know it will cost

him his life!" Proverbs 7:21-23. By an early death--

the immoral person takes a shortcut to hell!

The fire of lust--kindles the fire of God's anger.

"Nothing impure will ever enter it." Revelation 21:27

"Outside are the dogs, the sexually immoral."

Revelation 22:15

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The heart of a beast

"Man, who is vile and corrupt, who drinks up

evil like water!" Job 15:16

People sin with greediness, "Having lost all sensitivity,

they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to

indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust

for more." Ephesians 4:19. They have grown rampant

in wickedness, having laid aside the veil of modesty.

"The wicked know no shame." Zephaniah 3:5

We read that Nebuchadnezzar had the heart of a beast

given to him, Daniel 4:16. If all who have the hearts of

beasts, had the faces of beasts--men would be very scarce!

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Were our sins engraved upon our foreheads,

we would be ashamed to look up!

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Worldly things can no more relieve a troubled

mind--than a silk stocking can ease a broken leg!

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A father who chastises his child with tears

"When My anger is spent and I have vented My wrath on them--I will be comforted." Ezekiel 5:13
God does not take delight in punishing. Judges 10:16,
"His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." He is like a father who chastises his child with tears. But God was so provoked with the Jews, that it seemed a delight to Him to afflict. "When My anger is spent and I have vented My wrath on them--I will be comforted." Oh, what a venomous, accursed thing sin is--which makes a merciful God take comfort in the destruction of His own creature!

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It will soften a stone!

Christ's blood is a SOFTENING blood.

There is nothing so hard, that it cannot be softened by this blood. It will soften a stone! Water will soften the earth--but it will not soften a stone; but Christ's blood mollifies a stone. It softens a heart of stone. It turns a flint into a spring. The heart, which before was like a piece hewn out of a rock, being steeped in Christ's blood--becomes soft, and the waters of repentance flow from it.

How was the jailer's heart dissolved and made tender when the blood of sprinkling was upon it! "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Acts 16:30. His heart was now like melting wax. God might now set whatever seal and impression He desired, upon it.

"I will give you a new heart with new and right desires,
and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your
stony heart of sin and give you a new, obedient heart."

Ezekiel 36:26

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Keep this medicine next to your heart

"The people of Israel called the bread manna.

It was white like coriander seed and tasted
like wafers made with honey." Exodus 16:31

The manna was a lively type and emblem of Christ, for
manna was sweet. It was a delicious food--and was
called angel's food for its excellency. Psalm 78:25. So
Christ, the sacramental manna, is sweet to a believer's
soul. "His fruit was sweet to my taste," Song of Solomon
2:3. Everything of Christ is sweet. His name is sweet. His
virtue is sweet. This manna sweetens the bitter waters of
Marah.

Nay, Christ's flesh excels manna. Manna was food--but
not medicine. If an Israelite had been sick, manna could
not have cured him. But this blessed manna is not only
for food--but for medicine! Christ has healing under His
wings, Malachi 4:2. He heals the blind eye, and the hard
heart. Keep this medicine next to your heart--and it
will heal you of all your spiritual distempers.

Also, manna was corruptible. It ceased when Israel came
to Canaan. But this blessed manna will never cease! The
saints will feed with infinite delight and soul satisfaction

upon Christ--to all eternity! The joys of heaven would
cease--if this manna would cease.

Every crumb of this Bread of life is precious!

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Must we have our bracelets and diamonds,
when Christ had the nails and spear going to His heart!

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The scum

Murmuring against God is not the way to get out
of trouble--but rather to go lower into trouble!

What does the child get by struggling--but more
blows? Oh, do not lisp out a murmuring word
against God! Murmuring is the scum which
boils off from a discontented heart!

"I was silent; I would not open my mouth--for

You are the one who has done this!" Psalm 39:9

David's ear was open to hear the voice of the rod
--but his mouth was not open in complaining.

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That duty which makes me proud!

"I hate pride and arrogance." Proverbs 8:13

Some take pride in their duties. This worm of pride,
breeds in sweet fruit. They have said so many prayers,
heard so many sermons. Luke 18:12, "I fast twice a
week, and give a tenth of all I get." Now they think
they have made God amends--that He is indebted to
them and they shall be accepted for their religious

performances. What is this but pride? Is this not to
make a Christ of our duties? The devil destroys some
by making them neglect duty, and others by making
them idolize duty. Better is that infirmity which humbles
me--than that duty which makes me proud!

Some take pride in their graces. They look down on
others whom they think are inferior to them in grace.

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The more bitterness we taste in sin
--the more sweetness we shall taste in Christ!

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/thomas-watson/the-mischief-of-sin/>

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