

# Sin's Ultimate End Is Misery

by Walter Chantry

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*The ultimate end of sin is misery, and feeling the misery of sin is a mercy from God, leading to a change in attitude and a start back towards God.*

**Duration:** 34:53

**Scripture:** Proverbs 13:15, Luke 15:14

**Topics:** "Consequences Of Sin", "Gods Love"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of the prodigal son from the Bible, specifically focusing on the consequences of living a life of sin and foolishness. The preacher emphasizes how the prodigal son squandered away all his blessings, including his family, wealth, education, and opportunities. As a result, he finds himself in a state of poverty, emptiness, and loneliness. The preacher highlights the futility and indignity of a life of sin, contrasting it with the true friendship and love that can only be found in God.

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## Transcript

I encourage you to take this story of the prodigal son in hand again, Luke chapter 15, and today in particular we'll be looking at verses 14 to 16. The story of the wayward child has a very sad beginning to it, has a very happy ending, thank the Lord, but a very sad beginning. It's not that the wayward son was unhappy.

As a matter of fact, he started out from home with a very light step. He expected to have a good time, he expected that he was going to find in the world both fortune and pleasure. But last week we looked at what sin is, because part of Jesus telling the story of the wayward son was to show us what sinners are, not just a particular sinner, but every sinner.

And because we're all sinners, this is our story, at least in part. Your life may not fit every detail of this story of the prodigal son, but it certainly fits part of it. And we saw the sadness of what sin is last week.

We saw, for instance, that sin is corruption within the heart. And we looked at the attitude of the young man's heart. And we saw that sin is action in the lifestyle.

But we did not really complete our look at sin, because we have to see that sin is ruin, in a sense. Sin is corruption in the heart at the beginning. It is action in the lifestyle as it continues, but it is ruin in the conclusion of its course.

And so this morning we need to think something about the miseries of sin. We began, it's hard to talk about the story in part. We've already talked about the restoration of the young man, and that's appropriate, because the story is a whole.

But it's important to look at the miseries of sin, as we're going to look at them this morning. Because misery does come with sin. It always does.

Sin goes sour sooner or later, and this sin went sour. And some people here this morning may be at that very place where your sin has gone sour. There is something sweet to be tasted in sin.

There's a honeycomb connected to sin, but there are plenty of things around the hive where the honeycomb is to be found. And when you begin to feel the sting of sin, when you begin to experience the misery of sin, it's important to know what's happening. And there's some here who no doubt have not yet begun to feel the misery of sin.

You're still enjoying the pleasures of sin, but someday you will taste the misery of sin, and it will be important to understand what is happening to you. Young men and women anticipating being free and indulging in the kind of life that they want to have, do not think that sin will have any misery in it. But sooner or later, it will indeed bring misery.

Sin always brings misery. As a matter of fact, in some ways, the greatest punishment of sin is sin itself. That's why the text that is printed on the top of the bulletin this morning, notice it from Jeremiah 219, where God said to the people of Israel in days of old, your wickedness will punish you.

How's God going to punish them? I'm going to let you do the things you wanted to do, and that's the worst punishment that you can receive. Your wickedness will be your punishment. Your backsliding will be your rebuke.

When will you realize how evil and bitter it is for you when you sin? Sin brings evil and bitterness to the people who sin. It inflicts many sorrows and tragedies on the sinner. Of course, it inflicts sorrows and tragedies on the people of his family, too.

It's not just a private matter. That's why Romans 1 speaks of God allowing men to sin as itself being a great judgment from God. God gives people over.

He lets them have their way, and that in itself is a punishment, because sin ruins people. And people, as we read in Romans chapter 1, receive in themselves the due punishment for their perversion. Well, the prodigal son was a sinner who eventually felt the misery of his sin, and the dreadful things of sin can be called free as we look at this story.

As you look at verse 14 in particular, the prodigal son came to feel the poverty that sin brings. After he had spent everything, everything was gone. His father had given him wealth.

You remember the father representing the Lord who brought us into the world, who gave us everything that we had, who brought us up. But here is the prodigal son who wasted it all. It was gone, and in the far country there was a severe famine in that whole country.

The country itself did not support him. It was ravaged with famine, and he began to be in need. He felt the need of being hungry.

For one who had been so proud, so eager to get away from home, so eager to make his own way in the world, this was a bitter pill. He was so sure that he could have a better life than his father provided at home. He was sure he could do it better, and now it was gone, and he was in need.

The book of Proverbs repeatedly warns. I hope, young people, that you read the book of Proverbs. It was written for young men and young women, and it repeatedly warns that an evil and a foolish child will come to poverty.

Faithful servants of God will not be destitute, and the sufferings of poverty in the world around us have to do with sin. The reason there is so much suffering in our nation is not because the government has failed with the program of welfare. That's not the root problem.

That doesn't mean the government hasn't failed to take care of the poor. But that's not the root reason why there is so much poverty. One of the great causes of poverty, one of the major causes of poverty, poverty, it's not the only one, but it is the major cause of poverty, is sin.

Sin in the hearts of those who sink into poverty. It isn't always the person who is in poverty who has sinned the greatest. Sometimes it's the father who brings his children to hunger, because he will not work, because he spends all of his money on booze, because he spends all of his money in gambling, because he spends all of his money on another woman, and so the entire family is sunk into poverty.

But the cause of poverty, you see, is not the government failing to take care of the children, but the father. Or the mother who is sunk into sin. The sins of laziness and rebellion and wild living lead to poverty.

They lead to suffering. Now, have you ever felt want or lack because of your sin? When God lets a man go into the far country, the society will not provide him with anything. It's interesting, with all of the apparent luxury of the gambling casinos in Atlantic City, New Jersey, and all of the wealth and the opulence that is paraded in the gambling casinos.

The poverty that is caused by it. Just to read some of the reports of the people who are left with nothing, absolutely nothing. It provides no wealth.

It eats away at the wealth. So sin always gobbles up that which God has given to man. The son spent his father's wealth.

He didn't get any of his wealth from the far country. The land of sin did not make him wealthy. He wasted what he had from his father.

He misused it. He had borrowed it from his father, and it was all gone. He felt the poverty.

And then he felt the vanity. Look at the end of verse 16. The vanity of the life of sin.

The man sent him into the field to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. The futility of the life of sin.

No one gave him anything. Now, the companions of the far country were glad to have him for what they called a friend, but it was not a real friendship. They would slap him on the back as long as he was buying the beer in the, in the barroom.

They would laugh with him as long as he was paying the way and gambling with them. The ladies of the night would hug him while he was giving them money. But when he was in trouble and when he was in need, nobody cared.

Nobody came to him. Nobody gave him anything. That is the companionship of sin.

After he had spent everything and money couldn't buy it any longer, he had no friendship built. He had accomplished nothing. When the lights of the strip went out and the noise of the music called stop, and the companions of the night were gone, there was a hollow silence in his soul and nobody cared about it.

There was a frightening loneliness. He was alone. He felt the poverty.

He felt the emptiness. He felt the vanity of life. And then he felt the indignity as well.

In verses 15 and 16, he went and hired himself out to a citizen of the country who sent him into the field to feed pigs. Once he was the heir of a wealthy and good man. Once he was part of a noble family.

A kind father watched over him. But now he was a servant to a pig farmer, to a hard man, and surely if you know something about the Bible history, you know what a disgrace it was for Jews to have anything to do with swine. And here he was tempted to eat what the pigs were eating.

He had sunk to the level of a beast himself. He was willing to eat at the trough with the pigs. If only his want could be satisfied.

This was shameful. He was degraded in his experience. He was a crushed man.

There was no dignity left to him. And his self-image had to be low to even think of that. But he did think of it.

He felt worthless. He felt alone. He felt empty.

He felt hungry. And he couldn't provide his own needs. You see how the story our Lord Jesus is talking about illustrates Proverbs 13, 15.

The way of the transgressors is hard. Have any of you ever been impoverished by your own foolishness? Have any of you ever been brought to a piece of bread because you squandered away all the opportunity and wealth and education that you've been given? Have any of you squandered away your good health and been in need? Have any of you wasted all of your time and opportunity that there was none left? That your family was ruined? That your life was on the rocks? Have you begun to feel the emptiness within your own spirit? Sin's pleasures can't satisfy the soul. Have you ever begun to cry out of loneliness and distress? Has only silence answered you? Have you found that there are no people who really care for you? When the drink is gone and the noise is over and the wild times have ended, have you perhaps been unable to give up the habits of sin? But you've begun to indulge in them more and more only to silence this hunger of the spirit, rather than to seek pleasure in the sin.

Have you lost all social acceptability? Have you been disgraced? Have other people found out about your sin, as your entire family suffered disgrace? These are the miseries of sin. It's possible to feel these miseries of sin at any stage in life. When there's only sin in your corruption, you can be embarrassed at your sin.

When it's only an attitude of the heart, it can come when you're living high. It can come when your life is ruined. If you've felt the misery of sin, the story of the rebellious child is about you, and it was intended for you, so that you would seek pardon and blessing from the hand of God.

And you'll be happy to follow through the story and see exactly what the end of this miserable, wayward child happened to be. But we're going to take a few moments more to think about this young man and his ruined condition, and to see that the feeling of the misery of sin is a mercy from God. When a person begins to feel miserable in his sin, when he suffers under the ruin that he's brought on himself by sin, that's a mercy from God.

When God spoils your enjoyment of sin, that's a blessing. If poison tastes bitter and you spit it out, that's a blessing. If a thing that will kill you and destroy you becomes noxious and undesirable to you, and you feel that that's what it is, that's a blessing.

That's wonderful. Because sin always does lead to misery. One cannot help but think about the Bible's doctrine of hell, the place of suffering beyond this world, the place in which people suffer misery.

It's a place that's made up of the very same three elements that this young man experienced in his lifetime. It's a place that's made up of experiencing the miseries that every Christian has felt before he has fled to Jesus Christ for mercy. There is a place that's called hell in the Scripture, and our Lord Jesus Christ thought a great deal about it.

It's a place of supreme and everlasting poverty. At one time, our Lord Jesus described it as a place where a man couldn't even receive enough water to put on the tip of his tongue and relieve the suffering of the burnings of the place where he found himself. A famine rages there.

There are no material things to satisfy the human body or soul. It's a place of complete and unending vanity where there's an emptiness within, where people feel the futility of their life and their existence, and there are no companions to help or encourage or comfort or make it an enjoyable place to be. Complete depressing sense of loneliness and failure and distress and depression.

And it's a place of ultimate eternal indignity, poverty, vanity, indignity. This young man wanted to eat with the pigs, and he became a companion of the beasts of the field. In hell, men become the companions of devils and live on the diet that's given for them by the Almighty.

And those who never come to feel the misery of sin in this life will live under the misery of that place forever, worlds without end. If the fun of sin does not end for you in this world, then the misery of sin will never end for you in the world to come. And if that's true, then it's a great blessing from God when your sins go sour, when there's no sweet juice in the sin that you love anymore.

But it's all misery and effort to continue. So if you are suffering poverty because of your sin, or if you are suffering an overwhelming sense of loneliness and dissatisfaction, there is no sense to it all in life. Or if you are ashamed and broken by your sin, you see, there's still time to seek the Father in the story.

There's still time to go to the Lord and receive pardon, and to have the best robe put upon you, and to enter into the feasts that the story talks about. Self-misery is a kindness from God. The more you read of the New Testament, the more you realize that the people who sought Jesus Christ were the people who were miserable.

The sick people sought him. The hungry people sought him. The sinners sought him.

The people whose lives had fallen apart sought him. The people that had nowhere else to go sought him. But those people that had it all together, and life was going smoothly for them, they never sought Christ.

The Savior walked through the world, but they felt no need of him, and so they didn't go to him. When a person begins to feel the misery of sin, it's a great blessing. Sometimes there are young people who grow up in Christian homes, and they look at the world, and it seems so attractive to them, and every time they try to sin, every time they try to side up to the world and begin to live like the world, everything goes wrong.

Everything falls in on their heads. People find out about their sin. They get into trouble.

They feel the bitterness of sin. If that happens to you, that's a mercy from God, that you feel the problems that are connected with sin. Do not make the mistakes that the prodigal son made when he began to feel the misery of sin.

It's interesting, if you look at the story, when he began to feel the misery, after he had spent everything, he said, well, I'll fix this up. I'll get a job. I'll earn back the money that I lost.

I'll gain respectability by working hard. I'll reform my life. Yeah, I was always in the dance halls, and in the booze parlors, and all the rest.

Now I'm going to clean up my act. I'm going to get a job. I'm going to get it all together.

The only hope is returning to the Father. The only solution for the misery of sin is returning to Him, to call on the name of the Lord, and to go to Him in need. He only delayed what he needed to do by taking this extra step.

Miseries of sin are a mercy from God. But then I hope you will see, as we look at the prodigal son in this condition, that when he felt the miseries of sin, that was a mark that a change was taking place inside him already. He was not yet in the arms of the Father, but something was changing inside the young man.

And I say this because if you come to the place that you begin to weep over what sin has done to you, it's made you hungry. It hasn't satisfied you. It can't provide what you want.

It's left you with an aching void, dissatisfied. It's left you disgraced in the eyes of other men, and in your own eyes. You can hardly look yourself in the eye in the mirror in the morning.

Well, if you felt that way about sin, it marked something of a change within your attitude. The young man had not come to conversion yet, but feeling the misery of sin and the suffering that came from sin, there was a very subtle change, an important change, a very important change. He was no longer the brash, upbeat, eager-faced, bright-eyed youth who was ready to throw himself into the promising fast lane of life.

He was no longer that young man. That was a few verses earlier, before he tasted the misery of sin. Now the optimism is gone.

The hope is tarnished. He has felt the hardness of the world that had promised such bright things when it offered him sin. His spirit is subdued because he has felt the miseries of sin.

He senses his own want and need. He's aware that he lacks something. He is conscious of distress in his soul.

It may be very vague within him. It may be ill-formed in his mind so that he couldn't say it very well. But this, dear friend, is the start back toward God, the Lord who made him, for the sinner.

This is the start back. And I say that because if there's anyone here whose life is broken by sin, and your heart is almost overwhelmed with the sorrow that's come upon you because of your sin, or a husband's sin, or a father's sin, or your own sin, and life seems to have fallen in upon you, and you feel crushed by the misery that's brought by sin, that feeling of misery is the start of a change and the start of hope. It's a very important, though a subtle, change.

It constituted for the man a change in outlook. A change in outlook, and that's very important. When you feel lost and you sense misery, poverty, vanity, indignity, disgrace, then your attitude towards sin has been altered.

Your love affair with sin is over, and that's the important part. You may still be enslaved to the sin. There are iron-like habits that you can't break.

But you no longer have the stupid philosophy that sin is beautiful. The dumb hope that sin will satisfy no longer crosses your mind. The childish dream that sin will bring happiness is gone.

Self-confidence is broken. World confidence is broken. Helplessness is dawning.

That's a saint movement toward humility. Disillusionment with sin is a great thing. Are you disillusioned with sin this morning? That's an important step.

That's an important work of God within the soul. It's the reason why God has attached misery to sin, to disillusion people with sin. It's the reason why the abused harlots in the New Testament came to Jesus Christ, because they no longer thought that there was anything beautiful about sin or anything hopeful in sin.

They had tasted bitterness and hardness, and they were abused by it, and they looked for help somewhere else. However far down the lost son had gone into sin, you see, he couldn't really forget the home from which he came. He couldn't forget that.

And when he was working in the pigsty, he started thinking about that, his father, the home, the people who worked with him, the kind of provisions there were there. He could not obliterate the fact that he was made for higher things than working with swine in the field, and eating like the swine of the field. Misery of sin, you see, brings a person to think about these things.

And parents, that's an encouragement to you. You have sons and daughters in sin. They will never forget what they heard about God and truth in your home.

That doesn't mean that they won't go very far into sin. But the sovereign God who let them go into sin, who allowed his son to go into sin, we commented on that last week, the same God sent the stinging hornets to make him miserable in sin and to inflict his soul with warmth so that he wouldn't stay in sin. Maybe that's why your life is broken and unhappy, if it is.

Maybe it's God who won't let you be happy in sin, so that you can't perish, but you have to look elsewhere. If only you follow the rest of the prodigal's course, then there's forgiveness for sin and joy in the end. I think the story takes the prodigal to the depths of suffering and to the lowest shame, to give the hope of salvation to the chief of sinners, to the worst rebels, so that there's hope for them.

To be saved, you have to come personally into the presence of the Father. That's how the story brings the prodigal into the arms of the Father, where he receives the pardon. So to be saved, to be forgiven for sins, you have to come into the arms of the Father, into the presence of the Father.

And yet the most profound changes, which induce a man, which induce a woman in sin, to go to the Father, where they can receive forgiveness, take place when they are far, far, far away from the Father, and in the lowest depths of sin. Now this young man's thoughts about turning to the Father were not without the means of grace. He knew something about the Father.

He knew something about the home to which he returned. But the time when his attitude changed toward the Father and the home was when he was farthest away from the means that would encourage him to return to the Father and the home. And the time when God worked within his heart to change his attitude was when he was in the depths of sin and disgrace and misery and brokenness.

Not when he was in the arms of the Father. This tremendous change took place when he was wallowing in sin. But he felt the misery of sin.

I ask you again, has the Lord been preparing you through bitter experience to have second thought? Maybe what I thought was going to be a wonderful lifestyle, an enjoyable life, isn't all that I once thought it was. Do you remember the Lord who made you and the goodness of God's will of his creatures who trust in him and fellowship with him? Have you ever thought of turning back toward God and receiving some of the goodness that he showers on all those who trust him? If the Lord has made you ready to be finished with yourself and finished with sin and finished with the world, then go to him at once. No intermediate steps of getting yourself ready.

Go to him at once, because that's where the pardon is, in his arms. There's a wonderful thing about this story. Verse 14.

One can hardly explain all that it means. He had spent everything. He already squandered his family.

He already squandered his wealth. He already squandered his intelligence. He already squandered his chance to have a good education and to do something useful.

He already squandered his job. He already squandered his friends. He already threw away everything that he had that could have been used for good in this world.

He doesn't have anything left to offer to God or to use for the praise of God. It's all gone. Nothing left to offer as far as his own efforts are concerned.

Nothing to bring back to the Father. Nothing at all to bring. But though he has spent everything in earthly opportunity, the best things were still his.

The Father said, bring out the best robe and put it on him. The relationship of love and joy and peace with the Lord God Almighty. No matter how deep the person has gone into the gutter of sin, it's available if

you'll only turn to the Lord and turn his back on self and sin and the world.

And the happiness of the story, that when the lost son, the dead son is returned, all of heaven breaks out merriment and rejoicing in celebration. And so do the true people of God. The son is received by a father.

The father is absolutely delighted that he returns. No rebuking, no cursing, no I told you so, just the open arms and the best of robes for the sinner who will turn. Has sin made you miserable enough to turn? It's the mercy of God.

It's the sovereign working of God when he makes a man miserable and makes a man begin to think differently about sin and about the Lord himself. If you've begun to think, if you've begun to be miserable, then don't delay but turn to God. Have a plan like the young man and go back to God and you'll receive pardon.

Let's bow together in prayer. Our Father, we thank you for the story of the lost son. It's a story about ourselves and there's not a person here who has not experienced something of the ugliness of sin in his heart and in his practice.

And Father, every Christian here has tasted the bitterness of his sin, the misery of sin. How we thank you that you ever sent that misery to make us be through with our sin and to turn to you. Father, if you've been making anyone in this assembly hall miserable, sad, distressed with the emptiness of sin and the poverty of sin and the disgrace of sin, we pray that you would also stir him up and not let him go until he forsakes his sin and finds sin forgiven.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

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