

(The Real Truth) 2. the Real Truth About Sin

by Zac Poonen

Sin is choosing created things and ourselves above God, and wanting our own way and disobeying God's laws, with consequences that ruin our lives and make us unhappy in this world and will finally destroy us in eternity if we are not saved from it.

Scripture: Romans 6:16

Topics: "Human Nature", "Sinfulness"

Description

Zac Poonen delves into the reasons why some men often behave like animals, emphasizing that it is due to being solely focused on bodily needs and earthly existence, similar to animals. He highlights that God created humans to be moral and upright, with character and self-control, unlike animals driven by basic instincts. Poonen explains that despite being clever and educated, humans can still be slaves to greed, selfishness, and other passions. He explores the concept of freedom of choice given by God, the consequences of disobedience, and the importance of obeying God's commands to attain true freedom.

Transcript

Why do some men often behave like animals?

The answer is: Because they are only interested in their bodily needs and in their existence on this earth.

What is an animal interested in? Food, sleep and sexual satisfaction. That's all. And when a man is interested only in these things, we can say that he has descended to the level of the animals.

But God didn't make man to be like the animals. He created us to be like Him - moral and upright, with character and self-control, and not a slave to animal passions.

The fact that we are cleverer than the animals and that we are educated, doesn't make us better than them! Even clever, educated people are slaves to greed, selfishness, sexual lust, anger etc.

There is a part of us that is deeper than our minds, and that is our spirit. Our spirit makes us aware of God. This is what no animal has.

As we saw in the last chapter, God has made us as moral beings with the power to choose freely. But the danger of having freedom of choice is that we can use that freedom to please ourselves and to disobey God's laws. But God was willing to take that risk - because He wanted children, who choose Him freely.

All the chaos, confusion, diseases and evil in the world are the direct result of man disobeying God and listening to the devil.

The first man and woman that God created were called Adam and Eve. They were innocent when they were created. They had to make a choice if they were to be holy. And in order to make a choice, they had to be tempted, so that they could refuse evil and choose God instead. And so God allowed Satan to come along and tempt them.

We read about this in the first book of the Bible, in Genesis chapters 2 & 3.

There is a lot of difference between innocence and holiness. Innocence is what you see in a baby. If you want to know what Adam was like when he was created, look at a baby - innocent, and ignorant of good and evil. But that little baby is neither holy nor perfect. In order to become perfect, that baby will have to grow up and make some choices, refusing the evil and choosing God.

It is when we refuse to yield to temptation in our minds that we develop character. You are what you are today because of the choices that you have made in your life thus far.

If others around you are better than you, it is because they made better choices in their lives than you did. We are all making choices everyday - and those choices determine what we finally become.

When God made the first man and woman, He gave them the opportunity to become holy by allowing them to be tempted by Satan. He placed them in a garden and told them that they could eat of every tree in that garden except one. That was a test.

In fact, it was a very easy test - for they were sent into a garden having thousands of attractive trees with luscious fruit, and told that they could eat all of that, except the fruit from one tree. But they failed in that simple test of obedience.

For Satan came along into that garden and tempted Adam and Eve saying that if they ate of that forbidden tree, they would be like God. The temptation that Adam and Eve faced at that time was not just a simple matter of eating the fruit of a tree, but of becoming like God if they wanted to.

That was what Satan himself had at one time wanted to be. And that was what he told Adam and Eve that they could also be. Of course, what Satan told them was a lie - just like the lies that he deceives people with today. Just as people fall for Satan's lies today, Adam and Eve fell then. They disobeyed God and suffered the same fate as Satan did earlier. They were cast out of God's presence.

All the details of that event can be read in the first book of the Bible - in Genesis chapter 3.

Adam and Eve thought that by disobeying God's command they would be almighty and free, just like God Himself was. But did they become free? No! They just became slaves of Satan. It is only by OBEYING God's commands that we can become really free.

This is where Satan deceives so many people. He tells them that if they want to really enjoy life they should ignore God's laws.

Now we have seen how sin originated in the human race.

Adam and Eve took a very important decision that day in the garden of Eden. It produced lifelong consequences for themselves and for their children.

All the decisions that we take in life, produce consequences. We all have to reap what we sow. And many times, even our children have to reap the bitter fruit of what we sow. In Adam's case, he and his wife were sent out of God's presence for the rest of their lives.

We should not imagine therefore that the little choices we make today are unimportant or that we will never reap a harvest in the future of what we are sowing today. God allows us to be tested and to be tempted through various people and various situations, so that we might prove to Him that we really want God more than anything on earth. That is the purpose of every temptation that we go through - to test whether we value the Creator more than all created things.

The essence of all sin is to choose created things and ourselves above God. It is to choose our own way instead of God's way. It is to seek to please ourselves instead of pleasing God.

Sin is not just committing adultery or murder or theft. It is wanting our own way. We see the beginnings of sin even in the stubbornness of a little child. Sin dwells within every child's nature from birth, and as he grows up, he is determined to have his own way, to grab and to fight with other children to get what he wants.

As we grow up to manhood, we don't change much from what we were when we were children. We just become cleverer and change our methods! Even cultured people remain exactly the same. They just cover up their selfishness, their covetousness and their lust with an external veneer of graciousness, or perhaps even religion!!

Sin has penetrated every fibre of our being. We cannot get rid of sin through religious exercises like fasting and prayer or through pilgrimages or self-control. God alone can save us from sin.

But God has to wait until we recognize sin for the evil that it is. Jesus once said that He did not come to call the "righteous" but sinners. This did not mean that some people on earth were righteous and others sinners. He spoke that sarcastically to self-righteous religious people who considered themselves holy. Jesus meant that He could not save those who saw themselves as "righteous".

Only those who RECOGNIZE that they are sick will go to a doctor. Even so our first need is to recognize that we are sinners.

Whatever our religion may be, we are all sinners. We have sinned against God's holy laws, in thought, word, deed, attitude and motive.

We have come short of God's holy standards.

Sin is more damaging to our soul than sickness is to our body.

But do we recognize this?

What is your reaction to AIDS - the dreaded sexually transmitted disease that is spreading around the world today?

AIDS is so contagious, that people are afraid to go anywhere near anyone who has that disease. Sin is actually worse than that - the only difference being that the damage that sin does is to our souls. So it is not visible externally. Sin's effects however are far worse than those of AIDS. It ruins our lives, makes us unhappy here in this world, and will finally destroy us in eternity - if we are not saved from it.

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