



The Saddest Word

TEXT:

Genesis 4:7

“Sin Croucheth at the door”

What is the saddest word in the Bible and in human speech? Some thought that it was death; others, Hell; others, Depart; and many voted for Lost.

But what is the saddest word? What is the word that is the fountain of woe, the mother of sorrows, as universal as human nature, as eternal as human history?

What is the word that is the cause of all war and violence and hatred and sorrow and pain? What is the word that is man's worst enemy?

What is the word that nailed JESUS to the Cross? That word is sin. “Sin Croucheth at the door”—Genesis 4:7

And there, ever since, with its sorrow and its woe, sin has been crouching at humanity's door, and will continue to crouch.

This is not the first appearance of sin, but the first mention of sin, and the first appearance of the final fruit of sin.

“When lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.”

Here, then, you have death, the first murder, the first death of man, as the finished work of sin.

This is the beginning of the long, sad chapter of sin, a chapter which comes to a close only with the last chapter of the Bible, when there shall be no more curse and no more sin.

All the sorrow, all the woe, all the bitterness and violence and heartache and shame and tragedy between man's creation and fall and his final redemption and restoration to the image of God is summed up in that one word, SIN.

Lost is, indeed, a sad word; so sad that only Christ who came to seek and to save the lost would seem to have the right to pronounce it.

But through what are men Lost? Lost through their sin. Lost to themselves, and lost to God.

They are lost through sin, and when we deal not with effects but with causes there is no doubt that sin is the saddest word.

This morning I want to show the sadness of sin, not by abstract argument or reasoning, but by illustration in the lives of men, by an appearance of what sin did in the lives of men whose history is related in the Bible.

The Bible is the perfect and eternal mirror of the human heart, and you can be sure that what sin did in the lives of men in the Bible it is doing in the lives of men today.

What was true of man in Eden is true of man in Hollywood, and what was true of man in Jericho and Jerusalem is true of man in Fort Worth Texas.

II. Cain and the Sadness of Sin in Personal and

Family Life

There was something wrong with Cain before he brought his offering. God's displeasure and rejection of Cain's offering, and His acceptance of the offering of Abel, was not because of what Cain brought, the firstlings of the field, or what Abel brought, the first fruits of his flocks.

The trouble was in the heart of Cain. God said to him, warning him, "If thou doest evil, sin croucheth at the door."

This sin in the heart of Cain was quickly followed, for sin multiplies rapidly, by the sin of mankind sin painted man's face with the dark colors of hatred and jealousy.

Hate lifted its hand and the first murder was committed, and the blood of Abel cried for vengeance from the ground, stained for the first time, but not for the last, with the blood of man.

Here, at the very beginning of man's history, we have a powerful demonstration of the sorrow and havoc of sin in personal and family relationships.

This was a brother who slew his brother. Life has its struggles and hardships and trials, but where love and loyalty light the way all things can be endured.

The real bitterness and sadness are in the sins of personal and family relationships. This is the real burden and load of life.

III. Saul and the Sadness of Sin in a gifted life

There is always something likable and appealing in Saul. He draws you like a magnet across the ages.

In many respects he was a great man, head and shoulders over all Israel, not only in stature, but in moral qualities such as courage, patriotism, humility, and sincere affection.

His choice for the first king of Israel seems well justified.

The pride and disobedience, reliance upon himself instead of upon God, show in his life, and when he has been rejected and another chosen in his place, then jealousy begins to rage in his heart.

We find him seeking to kill his son whom he loved, and David his best friend, who had charmed away the evil spirit that had vexed Saul.

Then, abandoned by Samuel, rejected and forsaken by God, Saul goes at midnight to consult the witch and call up dishonored and neglected Samuel, who pronounces upon him tomorrow's doom, "Tomorrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me."

There you see what sin can do to a great and gifted life.

No wonder Samuel wept all night over Saul and his fall, no wonder that David, in the most beautiful poem ever spoken by man, lamented over Saul, his shield and his bow cast away as if he had not been anointed with oil.

Sin spares none. It strikes for the highest and most spiritually successful and tries to make it's mark.

I wonder how many times the story of Saul has been repeated, and men with preeminent gifts and notable talents have been broken, dishonored, and dethroned by sin.

IV. David and the Sadness of sin in a Godly Man

David was a godly man, and his every natural impulse was God-ward. That is true in spite of all the ridicule and ostracization that David had faced.

On one side of his life he was, indeed, a man after God's own heart. This was noted of David before his fall, not after it.

But one day in battle, when David should have been at the head of his army, which was at war, he remained at home.

Relaxing one night on the roof garden of his palace, he saw a beautiful woman and was charmed by her and entertained the lust in his flesh and took her for his own.

That was not the first nor the last time that this has happened.

But David's great adulterous sin was followed by something much worse, the cruel and treacherous murder of the woman's husband, who happened to be David's loyal officer in the army. That is the story of David's fall.

Now, who is this that we see prostrate in the dust? And whose cries for forgiveness?

Who is this that beseeches God not to cast him away from His presence, and not to take His Spirit from him?

David, is it thou? Thou, the ruddy youth who kept the sheep on the hillside, the youth who slew both the lion and the bear?

David, is it thou, the youth who of all the sons of Jesse was chosen by Samuel to be the king of Israel?

David, is it thou, the youth who with his sling and his trust in God slew that Giant called Goliath? David, is it thou, who with thy harp did drive out the evil spirit from oppressed Saul?

David, is it thou who when Saul, thine enemy, was in thy hand, did twice spare him, refusing to smite the Lord's anointed?

David, is it thou, the singer of the Psalms which still breathe and express in deepest melody the noblest aspirations, the grandest faith and trust, the deepest sorrows of the Christian?

Yes, David, alas, it is thou! Would that thou hadst fallen first on the field of battle. Holy angels, who are wont to frequent this sacred house, withdraw now for a little, we pray thee, from this place!

Holy angels, withdraw; from this man of God that has greatly fallen.

Withdraw! Withdraw and leave me to mourn alone over this adulterer and murderer who once was the man after my own heart.

But all these things are written for our admonition, and we are glad that the Holy Ghost who inspired this record, and inspired the songs and prayers of David, did not leave out the story of his fall, for even in his fall David is our friend and our teacher.

Sin, even the worst of sins, attacks the godly man. No past devotion, no past confession, no past prayers, not yesterday's resolve and repentance, but only the repentance and the faith and the prayers of today can keep us out of temptation and deliver us from sin.

V. Peter And The Sadness of Sin as a Disciple of Christ

It is midnight on the night of nights. The fire burns in the courtyard of the high priests. Servants, soldiers, and two disciples are standing about that fire.

A door opens into a chamber off the courtyard and Jesus is led out, bleeding from the cruel blows which have been showered upon Him, mocked, insulted, and spat upon.

Just at that moment a loud angry voice rings out through the courtyard, saying with a loud voice, "I never knew him!"

No, who was this apostle that denied Jesus? Is it the man whom his brother Andrew brought to Christ, and when Jesus saw him he said, "Thy name is Simon. Henceforth it shall be Peter, the Rock"?

Is it the man who fell at the feet of Christ in the fishing boat and sounded the prayer, "Depart from me, O God,

for I am a sinful man”?

Is it the man who when Christ asked his disciples to tell Him who he was, confessed, “Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God”?

Is it the man who, when many of his disciples forsook Him, answered the question of Jesus, “Will ye also leave me and go away?” with that great word which still in every crisis in life keeps the follower of Christ from the abyss of unbelief, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life”?

Is it the man whom Christ took up to the Mount of Transfiguration, and who was so inspired by what he saw and heard that he wanted to build three tabernacles and stay there forever?

Is it the man who said though all others forsook Christ he would not leave him?

Is it the man who with splendid courage drew his sword, and fearlessly faced the mob in the garden of Gethsemane?

Yes, Peter, alas, it is thou! Thou art the man! All of heaven’s sorrow and amazement is in that look of Christ when He looked upon Peter that night, and the saddest tears that were ever wept were the tears of Peter when he went out that night and wept bitterly.

VI. CLOSE

These men show in their life’s history the sadness of sin and prove, what really needs no proof, that sin is the saddest word in the Bible and in human speech.

But the Bible is the perfect and eternal mirror of the human heart. Folks, this is not just past history, or just Biblical history.

No, read the newspapers, read the best sellers, read the story of the lives of men and women in your world, recollect in your own life, and you will see that the sin of Cain, man’s inhumanity to man, still makes the earth a sad place;

That gifted and noble men like Saul are wrecked and ruined by sin, that godly men like David can be brought low in the dust, even by the sins of the flesh, and that men and women who follow Jesus, and in their hearts love Him, can yet strangely and sadly deny Him.

In closing this morning, let me say that there is one more life, which reveals the supreme sadness of sin.

Three crosses on a lonely, barren, skull-shaped hill, a thief on this cross and a murderer on that; and between them a man with a crown of thorns on his head and blood flowing from his hands and his feet and his side, while those in front of His cross jeer at Him and mock Him.

And who is this man? He’s the Son of man, the Son of God, the One altogether lovely, the Prince of Peace.

This is He before whom seraphim and cherubim fall down and veil their faces. And yet He hangs bleeding, reviled, and forsaken on a cursed tree!

What brought Him there? What did this terrible deed? What made Jesus cry out, “Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow”?

It was SIN! Your sin and my sin nailed Him to the Cross. There we behold the deepest and darkest sadness of sin.

No wonder the sun could not endure it and veiled His face; no wonder this stable terra-firma shook to its foundations.

But wait! Sin has extended itself on the cross. And the Blow that Sin brought to the Son of God allowed Him to retaliate with a blow called Washed, Cleansed, Forgiven, Set Free....

Liberation is now available to all victims of this saddest word, SIN.

Sin's masterpiece of sadness became God's masterpiece of forgiveness and mercy.

Christ's death became the foundation of our hope, the predication of our triumph.

Therefore, the saddest word and the saddest theme become the gladdest word and the most joyful theme in history.

This world has too much sadness in it caused by sin. Let's not add to the sadness, but rather, let's partake in the gladness that the sin bearer brought through Calvary.

Has anyone here this morning been hurt by sin? Is anyone heartbroken from sin?

Do you feel that Sin and its pretty picture has betrayed you and the pleasure, the joy, the happiness, the fun you thought it was going to do for you, is beginning to fade away.....

Then Come to the Cross.....kneel right here. Here is the remedy.

EARTH hath no sorrow that HEAVEN cannot heal.