



The Foolishness of Hidden Sin

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John 15:22 -- *"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."*

Ps 19:9-14 -- *"The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether." "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." "Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults." "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."*

Psalms 139:23-24 -- *"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:" "And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."*

I. INTRODUCTION -- NOTHING CAN COVER SIN

- Truth exists, only falsehood has to be invented. – Georges Braque
- What is more enchanting than the season of fall in a small New England town, when small children criss-cross each other underneath the leafy prism of colors and geometric gables of brooding clapboard houses? Mix in a whiff of salt-taffy air, a whisp of the Atlantic mist and a harvest moon, and we have true Americana caught as if in an old photograph come to life. There it is, Norman Rockwell on a living canvas.
- But what happens when a killer sneaks onto the scene? The whole mystical scenario falls flat before it begins, the magic disappears under chaos and the tranquility that is called the American Dream seems to rot quicker than the wet windowsill.
 - When 15-year-old Martha Moxley was killed on the until-then-safe streets of Greenwich, Connecticut, on October 30, 1975, no one simply knew how to react. The neat and pristine-clean confines of Belle Haven, the richest corner of town, had never anticipated murder. Its citizens became frightened and perplexed. And its police force, totally unprepared for this, found itself in a new and foreign world where issuing a simple parking ticket and fining a someone for drunk-and-disorderliness couldn't wipe away the misdemeanor.
- Martha Moxley was savagely killed in a manner that Belle Haven townspeople would have expected only in a horror novel. Suspicion pointed not to a monster, but to one of the most powerful families on the East Coast; a family that had connections that reached loftily to the Kennedys of Hyannisport, a family that wine and dined the town officials, a family that.....well, a family that you just didn't accuse of murder.
- For more than 20 years, the killer has evaded punishment, although suspicion heavily points to at least one member of this family, the Skakels. Because Rushton Skakel, the patriarch, is the brother of Ethel Kennedy (widow of the assassinated Bobby Kennedy), many believe that the identity of the killer has been known by authorities these past decades — but conveniently covered up to protect a name that was already pockmarked by enough scandal. Others are of the opinion that the unsolved murder is merely a case of simple small-town police inexperience. Factions support each theory.
- But on a hot day in June of 2002, twenty-seven years later, Michael Skakel was found guilty of murder and will apparently spend the rest of his life in prison.
- It really does not matter what we may clothe ourselves in, if there is sin in the heart it is only a matter of time before it will come to light and ruin you.

II. THE TEXT OF JOHN 15

- The facts are these: Once Jesus Christ steps into your life, whether by invitation or by accident, His law and actions now show our sin to us.
- Sin is always disguised when it tries to enter our lives. It comes in decked in the finest of clothing, it comes perfumed, and it masquerades itself into our lives.
- Sin came silently into the Garden of Eden. Sin was quite comfortable with Jesus at the pinnacle of the Temple. When sin enters our lives, it never comes as a monster, but it comes as a wooing friend who has the ability to fool even the best men.
 - James 1:13-16 -- “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:” “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” “Do not err, my beloved brethren.”
- **When Sin entered:**
 - Absalom -- He never understood that his rebellion was actually sin. He only saw the pleasure of sitting upon a throne.
 - Balaam -- He never understood that his associations with Balak to be sin. He only saw the prestige of being in the company of a king.
 - Ananias -- He never understood that his deception with the Apostles would lead to his death. He only saw his contributions as something to bring him a seat of honor.
 - Joab -- He never understood that his misuse of the altar in the Tabernacle would bring his own destruction. He only saw his unwarranted entrance as a bold way to confuse a young king.
 - Amnon -- He never understood that his attention to a friend would bring his own death.
- Sin really is an exhalation from the Pit. Sin is a loathsome disease. Sin is the putrefication of the inner man. Sin is a ghastly, God-smitten monster. Sin is something that requires the full attention of the Spirit-led man.
- Jesus affirmed that sin, to hide its deformity and shame, will always wear a cloak when it enters into the lives of men. But sin when it is finished. . . . always brings forth death. It will humiliate you, it will embarrass you, it will destroy you.
- There is only one remedy for sin, contrite repentance, a prevailing sense of broken-ness. Repentance does not understand half-measures. It is not a small adjustment of this failing or that mistake. It is not patch-work. It is renovation of the whole state, and the whole nature, and the whole personality.
Bishop Wilson – “There is no repentance where there is no change of heart.”
Martin Luther – “Repentance is a real bettering and change of the entire life.”
- This is what Paul meant when he was referring to the “new creature” transformed by God. The Lord emphasized “change your mind”—not merely change your actions or your habits, but your mind, your thoughts, your aims, your inner attitude, your very self.
 - Richard Baxter (A Puritan Pastor) – “Look to thy repentance that it be deep and absolute, and free from hypocritical exceptions and reserves.”

A. The First Coat -- An Official Role in the Church

- One of the first coats that sin will wear is that of position. When men become settled into serving God for a period of time, because of spiritual maturity (I hope that is the case), those men become leaders in a church.
- These men are looked to as Sunday School Teachers, as youth-pastors, as elders, as those who play instruments for the Lord. They are looked upon as those who are diligent about their relationship with God.
- But a position will not make us immune from the assault of temptation and sin. In the judgment, kings, presidents, and judges will stand with farmers, factory workers, and fishermen.
 - Nebuchadnezzar’s position did not remove the sin from his life. He still threw the three Hebrews into the fiery furnace.
 - Ahab’s position did not remove the sin from his life. He still had Naboth murdered.
 - Herod’s position did not remove the sin from his life. He still had John the Baptist murdered.
- Sin is much more obnoxious at a level of power than it is at the common levels of our world. And the sad thing about the matter is that it is only a matter of time before sin accomplishes the demolition in your life.
- Position in the world or in the church does not make sin any more palatable. When sin is given a throne it still remains sin.
- Belshazzar’s revelers could not stop the Hand from writing on the wall.

Ahab's sin could not keep him from being tossed from the balcony.

- Jehoram's imperial coats could not stop the arrow from Jehu's bow from piercing his heart.
- Jezebeel's pretension and seductiveness could not keep her from being thrown over the wall.
 - God's justice does not heed to the thrones of men no matter how elaborate they may seem.
 - That is why David seems to be pleading with God:
 - Psalm 139:23-24 -- "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:" "And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
 - When I lose the cloaks that life has given to me what is found within my own heart???
 - Is it a spirit of Absalom's rebellion?
 - Is it the unsubmitive spirit that Balaam hoarded away?
 - Is it the markings of Achan's secret sin?
 - Is it the recklessness about the altar that Adonijah had?
 - To every leader in this church: What is within your own heart that remains when all of the garments are pulled away from you?

B. The Second Coat -- The Christian Walk

- The second coat is even more alarming than the first. The second coat is that of the Christian walk. Could it be that I have worn the "Pentecostal" coat so long that I have learned how to do it?
- I know exactly how to worship without it really meaning anything. I know how to sing without really feeling what I am singing. I know how to listen to the preaching without really responding to it. I know how to make the right moves at the altar yet leave unchanged. I know participation without consecration.
- God looks deeper than just the surface. He probes the depths of the soul.
 - Matthew 23:25-28 -- "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess." "Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also." "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."
 - Never let me get to the place that I talk hot and walk cold. Never let me get to the place that I talk about revival but refuse to pay the price for revival.
- Men often go to great pains to appear to be pure, than to be pure. Outward purity is preceded by inward purity.
 - A cleansed heart is a sure producer of genuine and permanent purity of life.
 1. God estimates character by the state of the heart.
 2. I have a corrupt heart and it is terrible in the sight of God
 3. For me to have God's favor, I must be cleansed and for that cleansing to be effective, it must begin in my heart. (I have to throw aside the cloaks that I wear.)
 4. There is a place where the heart is cleansed and acceptable in the sight of God.
 - Time has a way of wearying men. Time has a way of wearing down even the greatest of men. If there is not a great quality of character found within their heart they will fail God.
 - For those who lack commitment and often find themselves on the fringes of the Church: How cheaply you are bargaining with Satan over the matter of your soul. For you to say, "I go to church at the United Pentecostal Church," and expect that to save you, how low your price has been.
 - If there is spiritual complacency in your life, if there are no signs of spiritual growth, if there is no evidence of the fruit of the Spirit within the heart, Satan has induced you into building upon a rotten foundation.
 - What really matters is the deeds that you involve yourself with in the Kingdom of God.
 - **Again, here the pleas of the Psalmist:**
 - Psalm 19:12-13 -- "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults." "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."
 - Secret faults will fissure and crack when the pressure rises. We do not know the day or the hour that our greatest temptation is coming into our lives. There are things that lie undetected in every one of our hearts and it is only a matter of time until we fall unless there is that constant hunger for God.
 - I must be cleansed from the secret faults. There must be a Guiding Hand in my life. There must be a Spirit-filled life that maintains my walk with Him.

III. THE DANGER OF PRESUMPTUOUS SIN

- We live in a generation that believes a number of lies about God. One of the lies that this generation has bought into is that God is more tolerant than He used to be. But there are some things that you and I must understand.
- The greater the grace, the greater the judgment for refusing it. The more that God does for us, the greater our responsibility to accept it.
- Secondly, we should never interpret the silence of God as the indifference of God. God's longsuffering is not a sign of either weakness or indifference. How easily we interpret divine patience as divine tolerance.
- Too often we look and see that those who are involved in sin appear to be getting away scot-free and there is no retribution for sin. Never forget that we face a certain judgement after this life. There are some who will be judged for sin here but the vast majority of sin will be judged at the White Throne of Judgement.
- Get your eyes off of those who are apparently getting away with their sin and focus your attention on God and His Kingdom. In the end all penalties will be exacted; retribution will be demanded; nothing will be overlooked. The unbelievers of all ages will be called into account and meticulously judged.
 - David's cry in *Psalms 19*.
Psalms 19:13 -- "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression."
- A presumptuous sin is one that is done out of arrogant self-confidence. It is committed out of a one's own feelings of superiority and importance. It is rude and disrespectful.
- The presumptuous sin is illustrated best in 1 Kings 13 when the king Jeroboam began to violate the purposes of the altar. An idolatrous altar was solemnly dedicated. The people's eyes were dazzled by the outgrowth of spiritual rebellion and there was Jeroboam standing by the altar to offer incense.
- Poised with the flame in his grasp, he was frozen in time by the cry of a man of God. His arm outstretched in eager, wrathful command to arrest the man of God who was violating his conscience, watched that arm wither in the presence of God.
- There must be that extreme carefulness about which we conduct ourselves in this life. My heart must be right. I must be cleansed in the sight of God.

IV. CONCLUSION -- ABRAHAM'S PRAYER

- Genesis 18 records that great intercessory prayer of Abraham. In that perplexing prayer that he offered to God, one finds that he stopped just short of saving a city.
 - Perhaps if there is fifty, will You save it?
 - Perhaps if there is forty-five, will You save it?
 - Perhaps if there is forty, will You save it?
 - Perhaps if there is thirty, will You save it?
 - Perhaps if there is twenty, will You save it?
 - Perhaps if there is ten, will You save it?
- To each of his requests, God informed Abraham that He would save Sodom and Gomorrah. But there were not fifty righteous men in Sodom and Gomorrah, nor forty-five, nor forty, nor thirty, nor twenty, nor ten. there was only six. But had Abraham prayed that God save Sodom and Gomorrah for six, He would have done so.
- For revival and church growth to take place, a pure heart is going to be a necessity. There is going to have to be a unity of purpose and desire.
- It was with that thought that I ask you to examine your heart. So with that in mind, that has been the direction of my own prayers. Can God bring revival with fifty, with forty-five, with forty, with thirty, with twenty, with ten. but I did not stop there. Can God bring revival if one heart is pure? Can God remove all the things from my soul and create a sense of holiness? Can the design of God mark it's imprint on my soul?
 - *Romans 7:21-25*-- "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me." "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:" "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."
- Cleanse me from my secret faults. Save me from my presumptuous sins. Bring revival to this church.
 - *Psalms 139:23-24*-- "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:" "And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

- What happens when we hear the voice of God? We draw near to Him and our hearts and lives are cleansed from all unrighteousness and sin.