



3. This thing called SIN!

The gospel (the good news of Jesus Christ) has been called the 'greatest story ever told.' Why is it the greatest? I would say, because it is about God blessing all nations. It is about good things to come - forever. In one passage it is correctly called "the everlasting gospel" (Revelation 14:6). It is God's plan for blessing all of humanity for eternity. Let us begin our study Christian essentials over the next eight lessons. I call this Christian Essentials because most Christians across denominations and nations would agree with the concepts presented in this series. Here we reflect on a topic that is not discussed much, "This thing called Sin."

NOTES & QUOTES FROM PODCAST

Today, we are going to talk about a really important word in the essential Christian vocabulary. This little three letter word "SIN" is probably the most misunderstood word in the English language, both at a popular level in the church and outside. To the average person, if it's fun -the church is going to call it a sin.

1. Common misunderstandings of God and Sin

Growing up, I thought of God as this big cosmic cop up in the sky, saying, "Stop the laughing, stop having so much fun. Don't make me come down there!"

If a surveyed people to give examples of sin most responses would be related to the issue of sex. The general opinion would be that the church would disapprove anything fun and enjoyable if it had any sexual connotations. Hmm... let me blow that myth away. While Christians believe that sex is to happen within the boundaries of marriage, let me remind you that the reason that sex is so great is simply because it was God who invented it.

2. What Sin means to Christians

So, what is the essential understanding Christians have about sin? Let me offer a simple yet profound definition by a former pastor of mine Rev Harold Percy. **"We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners."** Let this sink into you as I repeat it. "We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners."

3. Sin vs sin

Let's unpack the two ways the word is used in the Bible. One way is Sin with a capital letter 'S' and then other is sin with a small letter "s." Sin with the capital S is not about the individual actions like stealing or telling lies that people might or might do. Instead we must think about SIN with the capital S, as a kind of a power or destructive force that controls a person and makes them act in a particular way. That way is to rebel against God and His law.

3. The Tumour analogy of sin

The closest analogy of this Capital S is a medical one where we compare it to a tumour. But this is a spiritual tumour. Not dealing and removing this tumor will lead us to commit the small 's' sins and more importantly separates us from God. To get rid of myself of the little sins and to reconciler with God – I must deal with the tumour. Suppose my doctor diagnoses the reason I have constant headaches is that I have a brain tumor. I wouldn't go around telling friends, "I've got this brain tumor because of my headaches. Instead I would say, my head is constantly aching because I got this tumor."

And if I just take aspirin to deal with this the headache it may go for a while, but not dealing with the tumour ensures it will return.

I don't have the ability to deal with the tumor of Sin with a capital S in my life. My natural abilities are I need supernatural power to do that, God's power. This is where Jesus finally enters my story, and which we will explore in the next episode.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- If you were asked to describe sin, how would you explain it?
- Does the analogy of sin as a tumour sound logical and relevant to your experience?
- How do you currently deal with sin in your life, both the "sin" and the "Sin"?

HOW DOES THE BIBLE DESCRIBE SIN?

The Christian definition of sin is purposely disobeying the rules of God (*1 John 3:4*). The Bible says, "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse." For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools. (*Romans 1:18-22*)

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