

THE DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.

A. INTRODUCTION - Man in train.

Jesus said in Mt 5 “*You are the light of this world . . .*”, but if you’re here tonight and you call yourself a follower of Christ . . . is your light shining? One of the saddest days of my pastoral ministry was when I received news that a pastor friend of mine had confessed, after 5 years, to having been involved in an adulterous relationship. I wept for him. For 5 years people had been sensing that his preaching and leadership had lost it’s power . . . the light had gone out. He had been waving the lamp, calling people to repentance, but seeing very little fruit.

Praise the Lord that his sin was found out 5 yrs later, and that he confessed to it, and is now in the care of the Elders of that church, that he is now healing and the lamp is coming back on.

But what about you . . . is your light on? Remember what Mel said yesterday about Francis of Assisi, who used to say “*Preach the gospel . . . and if necessary – use words*” our greatest testimony for the gospel is our lives lived in purity and holiness. Even if we throw ourselves into the work of ministry, and yet our light has been compromised by hidden sin, it will count for nothing. Is your light shining?

Tomorrow I will be calling us to act on the conviction that God has laid on our hearts this week thru the sermons. . . and I will be giving an alter call for that. But before we get there, it is important that we take one last look backwards, and bring any baggage and bondage to sin to the Lord today, that we may be ready for tomorrow, that we may not be disqualified for tomorrow.

And as I talk I talk to everyone. I am a pastor, I know how hard it is to walk the Christian life pure. Maybe you’re here as a pastor or as a missionary, and you have struggled with a present habit that is bondage to sin, or an act that you committed years ago, but have not yet found forgiveness from. Maybe you’re just a regular attender of this church, and there is something that you need to deal with . . . I don’t know, but you do. Together we will never be able to accomplish the purposes of God unless we deal with sin, unless we separate ourselves from it. All our desires to be Caleb’s, all our desire to make sure that the things we are living for are worth Christ’s dying for will amount to nothing if we do not live pure lives. As the Apostle Peter says in

I Pet 1:14 – 2:11 ¹⁴ *As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived without the light of Christ.* ¹⁵ *But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;* ¹⁶ *for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*

¹⁷ *Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.* ¹⁸ *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers,* ¹⁹ *but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

⁹ . . . *you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

¹¹ *Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.* ¹² *Live such good lives among the peoples of this world that, though they ridicule your faith and accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds . . . and glorify God . . . "*

B. THE DECEIT OF SIN

III – Man in Gorilla suit.

Hypocrisy will find you out and even if you don't want to confess your sin, it will find you out eventually. But you know, few people fall into sin because they want to, we often fall because sin is deceptive, and we end up believing it's lie. I'd like this evening to share with you what I believe the 3 biggest lies of sin are.

1. The first is – sin tells you **“It's a secret – noone will find out . . .”**

III – Phosphorous (Spontaneous combustion)

Ps 139:11,12 *If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,"
¹² even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.*

God knows and will expose it because exposure is often times the only thing in our lives that will make us deal with the sin. Many of us would prefer to hide it and pretend it never happened unless it is exposed . . . well God will expose it so that we can turn back to him for mercy!!

Satan will expose it too – to shame God! There is nothing like a hidden sin!!!

2. **“It's OK – I can deal with this when I need to”**

III – Thread around finger

Heb 12:1 *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.
² Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

3. **“It's just a little innocent pleasure”**

III – Eskimos with wolves

Prov 5:3 – 5 *For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil;
⁴ but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword.
⁵ Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.*

C. WHY DO WE FALL

But why do we fall, why is it so easy for the devil to trip us up, and to extinguish our light?

1. **No boundaries** – in this permissive society we don't know what the limits are and so we don't recognize when we have gone too far. Ps 16:5 –6 *LORD, you have assigned me my portion and my cup;*

you have made my lot secure. ⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.

III – Drivers & Cliff
III - Goat at barbed wire – bald eyed!

What boundaries have you set in your life? About the use of money, about alcohol, about dressing, about your actions with the opposite sex, about wealth?

III – personal wealth and Bea and I
Billy Graham and women

2. **No Accountability** – Our compartmentalized lives . . .

III – Dinner with accountability group.

Ekk 4:9 – 12 ⁹ *Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work:*

¹⁰ *If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!*

¹² *Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

D. **CONCLUSION**

So where are you today my friend? Can you feel the wind of sin trying to blow out your light, can you see your flame fluttering in the breeze of a window in your life that you have left open, a window you need to close, maybe a friendship, a deal, a habit that will soon blow your light out. Or maybe it's already happened and you've been hiding it – no one knows yet . . . deal with it before God today, don't try to hide it, bring it to God, cry out to him for mercy and forgiveness.

III - Romans and rotten baby on back.

Confession call