

The Consequences of Sin

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[0 : 0 0] Well, with God's help, let's turn back to Joshua and to chapter 7. Sin has almost become a trivialised word.

I think it's fair to say that in our day and age, and particularly in our culture. Very often you see it used, even in things like the marketing and the advertising world, to try and lure people into purchasing certain indulgent and products.

Very often the language of sin is used. A few years ago, remember the Maginham Ice Creams, they were releasing seven new flavours of ice cream. They were marketed as the seven deadly sins, and that's the way in which they wanted to use to lure people into buying these particular products.

And you see the language of sin being used very often in that kind of advertising and marketing world, because people are almost attracted to it. Because they're using sin in a very trivial way. They're using sin in a very flippant way indeed.

And perhaps we ought not to be surprised in a sense when the world uses sin in that kind of flippant way, or when the world has a low view of sin. Because the world is opposed to the things of God, so that shouldn't really surprise us.

[1 : 3 1] But the concerning thing, and the thing that really should surprise us, is the fact that this low view of sin, this almost flippant nature to how we view sin, that's actually not just out in the world, it's actually creeping in to the church of God itself.

And that is very, very concerning indeed. More and more of the Lord's people are really losing sight of the serious nature of sin. It's almost as though sin is becoming an acceptable part of our lives.

Consciences are being deadened to it. That sense of conviction is perhaps something we had years ago, but now that sense of conviction is maybe not quite what it once was.

We're not looking at sin in the same way perhaps as we did in times past. To the extent that we now generally speaking, and this is a generalization of course, but generally speaking the church of Christ today has a very low view of what sin actually is, and that is a very, very big problem.

Now here tonight in this passage that we're looking at in Joshua chapter 7, this is a passage which highlights for us really the severity of sin in the eyes of the Lord, in the eyes of God himself.

[2 : 5 4] And in this passage we see how sin is so widespread. It's like a disease. You often hear of it being described like a disease, but that's what it is. It spreads.

It isn't just something that affects the individual. It isn't just something that affects the individual soul, although it does do that. It spreads wider than that. Even the sin of an individual spreads into a family as we see in this passage.

The sin of an individual spreads into a church or in this particular context. A whole nation is affected by sin. Sin is a plague that spreads in that way.

It's never just one thing affecting one person. It permeates and it affects a whole load of different people. And we'll see that as we go through this passage here.

So in the morning we looked at Israel defeating Jericho through the obedience to the Lord's command. And I suppose really considering what we were looking at in the morning, it's more like the Lord defeated Jericho.

[3 : 56] But you see what I mean? Israel defeated Jericho through the power of God. So we left things on a high and we didn't read anything bad in that passage. We didn't read that the Israelites had done anything wrong in that passage at all.

And actually if you start from the beginning of Joshua, Joshua chapter 1, and if you read all the way through to Joshua chapter 6, nothing is going wrong. There's plenty that has gone wrong before that. And there's plenty of that in the pages of Scripture before the book of Joshua.

But in those pages there's nothing really going wrong. Everything's going well. Everything's going well for the Lord's people. They cross into the promised land. The water dries up for them. They're being obedient. We're not reading of them doing anything wrong.

Of course, as we saw in the morning, they got their first victory. But now you come to chapter 7 and all of a sudden things go very, very wrong. All of a sudden they face a shock defeat.

Nobody's expecting this. The reader, as you're going through it, you're not expecting to see them defeated. Everything's been going well so far. But all of a sudden they come up against the people of I and they suffer a shock defeat.

[5 : 02] Now, the first thing that I want to look at this evening, I've really only got two things that I want to look at this evening, but the first thing that I want to look at this evening is why did Israel suffer defeat here?

Why did they suffer defeat? Well, when you look at verse 2 to 5 there in chapter 7, you could maybe highlight a few potential reasons if you're looking at that section there.

Maybe they were defeated because they arrogantly underestimated the people of I. That's one option because when you look at verse 3 there, the spies who spy out the land, they come back and they tell Joshua, these people, the people of I, they're no big threat. They're not like Jericho.

There's no point sending many people to fight them. There's only a few of them. Let's not tire out our army. We're better than that. We don't need to send everyone up. Just send a few thousand and that'll be suffice.

Send a few thousand of our people, they'll go up and they'll claim the victory. So is this the issue here? Have they been defeated because they're underestimating the enemy? Now, that is certainly something that we can apply to ourselves because how easy it is for the Lord's people, especially when we're maybe riding a wave spiritually and doing very well and things are going well for us, like Israel here.

[6 : 31] Everything's been going well. So only been victories and positive things up to that point. And sometimes for us, when everything is going well, life seems to be going well, or Christian life seems to be going well, or spiritual life, or work life, or family life, everything seems to be going well.

But at that very moment, we can underestimate the power of the enemy. We can think perhaps we can handle anything, and we can put ourselves in any situation and we'll be okay because we've got this sense that everything is going well.

And how often, when that happens, when we underestimate the power of the enemy, the power of Satan himself, what happens? But we very often suffer a spiritual and a sudden defeat because of that fact that we're underestimating the devil himself.

So is that the issue here? Or is it that they just underestimated I, they thought they could do it, but actually they couldn't? Well, that's absolutely not the case. It might be true, they may have underestimated it, but that's not the reason that they actually lost this battle here.

So what else could it be looking at that section? Could it be because that Joshua sent out the people to I without consulting the Lord?

[7 : 45] It is a problem that he sent the people to I without any instruction from the Lord, because up until this point, remember in the morning, we saw lots of instruction about how they were to defeat Jericho. There's nothing here. The Lord hasn't said anything.

The Lord didn't even tell him to send spies out there in the first place. So is the issue here that he sent the troops, he sent the army without any instruction from the Lord whatsoever?

Is that the issue here? And again, that's something that we can apply to ourselves as well, because that's something we do very often. We throw ourselves into all different kinds of spiritual battles and we take different journeys in life without really consulting the Lord and without seeking the instruction or the direction of the Lord. We just take the opportunity.

It opens up before us and we assume that we're meant to go that way and we take that route. We go into that battle and lo and behold, we suffer a defeat. Spiritually speaking, things get very, very difficult. So is that the issue here? Is that the issue that they've gone out when the Lord hadn't told them to go out?

Well, again, that is true. They haven't had the instruction of the Lord and they haven't as far as we know consulted the Lord, but that's not the reason that they've actually lost this battle here.

[9 : 10] The answer is clearly given to us in verse 1, there is clear as day, but the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things for Eich and the son of Karmie, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah took some of the devoted things.

Remember those pagan objects which we looked at in the morning, they took some of the devoted things and the anger of the Lord burned against the people of Israel.

So this is the issue here. The anger of the Lord is being unleashed on his own people. Why? Because of a particular sin. A trespass that has been committed by this man Eich and one man, not even the whole nation, one man Eich and committed a sin and the anger of the Lord is poured out.

Now you could say this is just a little offence. I mean on the grand scheme of things, he's taken some things, some spoil of this particular warfare here from the Jericho battle that he shouldn't have taken.

Is that really given other sins that we read in the Bible? Is that really a big deal? Well, it is a big deal. It is a big deal and it's a big deal for a very simple reason, because the Lord specifically told him not to do this.

[10 : 28] And we looked at that in the morning. Remember, in the morning we saw that when the walls of Jericho eventually crumbled and when the people were to go in there, God said, when you go in, you make sure you don't take any of the devoted things, any of the objects that belong to the people of Jericho, don't take any of that to yourself.

And he even said that if they come across any precious metals like gold, like Eich and Eich has taken, if they come across anything like that, then they were to put that into the treasury of the House of the Lord. So they were to take absolutely nothing themselves, because God didn't want them to be influenced in any way by these pagans.

He didn't want the pagan worship practices in any way to infiltrate into the Israelite cultists, the Israelite religious system. So they weren't allowed to take anything. And he was, God couldn't have been clearer on that particular command.

He made it very clear indeed. But Eich and Eich and, he's obviously seen some things and his heart wanted them. His heart wanted them. He coveted them. That's what we read there. He coveted them and he took it and then he hid it in his own tent.

And you know, how often coveting becomes the foundation of so many other sins. Is that not true? We know that ourselves in our own hearts. There's lots of sins that we commit, but coveting is very often the foundation of them all.

[11 : 58] Because it's something that happens in the heart and that's where sin begins, isn't it? That's where it takes root. And this man, he coveted. You know, coveting is, it's the last of the 10 commandments, but there's a way in which it almost undergirds every one of the commandments.

And before we break any of them, it's as though we break this one. Coveting, whether it's coveting glory for ourselves, coveting things for ourselves, and coveting out pride, whatever it might be.

Coveting is very often at the heart of many of our sins. And here Eich and was hoping that he could hide this sin. He was hoping he could hide it in his heart, hoping he could hide this sin, not just in his heart, but literally in his tent.

And we'll look a bit more at that later on. But he wanted to hide this sin. But this passage shows us that you cannot hide sin. It's impossible. You cannot hide sin. Sin will at some point be revealed. You can't contain it. You can't try and hide it away.

There's no such thing as secret sin. Because with the Lord, all sin is eventually exposed. Now, yes, you can hide your sins from others, but you cannot hide your sins from the Lord.

[13 : 16] He sees them. He saw exactly what Eich and was doing. Nobody else could see. He hid it in his tent and probably thought nobody else would ever see. But God saw. The Lord saw Eich and sin. The Lord knows all of our sin. And here in this passage, this sin is having an effect on the whole nation.

It's quite remarkable the way that works. Never underestimate the seriousness of sin. Never do that. Never do that.

And this, I know I've been calling it a little sin. There's no such thing as a little sin. But this supposed little sin here has resulted in the whole nation coming under the wrath or the anger of God.

That's quite a solemn thought indeed. And you can ask the question, is this unfair? Is this unfair for God's anger to be poured out on the nation for such a supposedly small sin?

Is that really something that is justified? Is this unfair? Well, the answer is very simple. It's not unfair. Because every sin is deserving of the wrath of God. And it's only in the Lord's forbearance and mercy and long suffering that He doesn't judge every sin in this particular way here.

[14 : 39] Now, you think of maybe some of the sins that you allow in your own life. You know, some of those, what we call little sins. I use that phrase gardenly. There is no such thing as a little sin. But we think of little sins. And you think of those little sins in your own life.

Whether it be not using the Lord's day correctly or using the Lord's day for ourselves, or perhaps gossiping, or perhaps not giving the Lord the worship that He deserves, not attending the means of grace, perhaps, when we should be.

These sins that we don't think of as that bad, we wouldn't be that ashamed of other people found out about these particular sins. That's a wrong thought process. But that's how we feel. These little sins. Well, any single one of these so-called little sins would warrant an eternity under the wrath of God.

The smallest of what we might call a sin. And that is a solemn lesson from this passage. The wrath of God is sandwiching this whole passage.

If you look at the first verse, so the very first verse and the very last verse of this chapter, you notice the first verse and the last verse there. They both refer to the anger of God. You see that the anger of God is referred to that first verse and in the very last verse in the chapter as well.

[16:04] It's like the whole narrative is sandwiched in the anger of God. And God is trying to tell us something there. God is trying to tell us the seriousness of sin by sandwiching this whole passage with references to the anger and the wrath of God.

He's showing us what sin deserves. And sin deserves the wrath of God to be poured out on it. So it shows us the serious nature of sin. So that's the reason for this defeat, the sin of Eichah.

But although we know that, we know that from verse 1, but Joshua doesn't know that. Joshua doesn't know that at all. We have what we call the reader's insight because the narrator tells us what's happened. But Joshua doesn't know why this has happened.

He can't actually understand why they have come to this shock defeat here. Everything's been going well so far. Joshua has had a tremendous leadership. Everything he's done from the point where he took over from Moses, everything has gone really well.

And now all of a sudden this has happened and he doesn't know why. He's unaware that any sin has been committed. And you see in verse 6 to 9 there, he's in utter confusion. Why has the Lord stopped favouring us?

[17:24] Why has he left us? And you have Joshua there in those verses and he's trying to reason with the Lord. And he's trying to figure out from the Lord why has the Lord done this?

Why is the Lord dealing with us in this particular way? And again we can apply that to ourselves as well. How often we find ourselves in similar confusing providences.

We don't always know why certain things happen to us, whether that be personally or corporately as a family or as a congregation even. We don't always know why we go through these particularly difficult times.

And like Joshua here, perhaps you can come with these kinds of complaints that you see here asking God, you know, why are you allowing this to happen God? Why are we going through these difficulties? Why is your cause being dealt such a blow?

And very often we come with those questions. Why? Don't always perhaps get the answers that we want, but we come with these questions. And very often the reason behind the things that are happening to us are hidden from us, like it was for Joshua here in this passage.

[18:38] And it's hidden because it's just part of the Lord's sovereign plan. So very often we never find out why these particular difficulties happen. But this passage here reminds us that sometimes, sometimes we find ourselves in difficulty and we find ourselves under some kind of judgment from the Lord because of our sin, or solemnly, even because of somebody else's sin.

That's what we learned from the passage. Now you have to be careful when you say something like that. I am not suggesting that every time we go through anything difficult or any time we go through any trial, that it's always because of a sin that we have committed or a sin that someone close to us has committed.

That's not the case at all. And you only need to go as far as Job to see that. Job, he suffered terrible things. Was that because of a sin?

It wasn't because of a sin at all. And we read that in the book itself. It was a trial that came to him through the sovereign plan of the Lord, but it wasn't because of sin.

But yet there are times when our hardship and the difficulties that we go through is to do with sin. I wish I were perhaps someone else's. But the question is how can we know?

[19 : 58] How do we know if sin is actually to blame? How do we know that? Well, all you can do is ask the Lord. You need to ask the Lord. That's what Joshua does here.

I don't understand what's going on. I don't know why this is happening. Tell me, tell me why this is happening. And then God does just that in verse 11. He reveals the issue and he says the issue is sin.

He says Israel has sinned. That's the problem. Israel has sinned. And there's tremendous grace there from what the Lord is doing.

Yes, the Lord's anger is burning against sin. And we see that in the passage. But he is gracious and he is merciful. And he shows that by revealing to Israel and to Joshua, revealing the sin to them.

And he does the same with us. He reveals our sin to us. Now, we don't always perhaps think of the Lord and convicting us of sin as being a mercy.

[20 : 59] We don't often think of it as being the grace of God showing us our sin. But it is. It's the mercy of God that he shows us our sin. Because by showing us our sin, that is implicit in that, is an invitation to repent, isn't it?

If he didn't show us our sin, that would be the worst thing. If he didn't show us our sin, we would think we were fine. It's the grace of God that actually reveals to us that we're sinners and that reveals to us what our actual sins are.

And that's what he's doing here in this passage. And here in verse 11, there are God details, the sin which has been committed.

And Joshua has told there about someone who has taken of the devoted things and even stolen and deceived and kept some of it among their own things.

And God tells him quite clearly, this is the reason, this is the reason that you have lost this battle. And he goes on to say towards the end of verse 12 there, I will be with you no more unless you destroy the devoted things from among you.

[22 : 08] So that's pretty serious. So here the sin of the minority, in this case, the sin of one man, the sin of one individual, is actually affecting the presence of God amongst the whole nation.

Now that's remarkable. We, in our culture and society, we tend to think in a very individualistic way, more so now than perhaps. We tend to think in a very individualistic way.

But when it comes to the people of God, you don't speak or think in terms of the individual. Whenever we read of the people of God, there's a strong emphasis on the corporate, there's a strong emphasis on the collective.

And that's what we see here. Now we might think to ourselves, it's not that big a deal if we sin. It's not a big deal. It might affect us, but it's not going to affect us.

But it's not going to affect my family. It's not going to affect my neighbors. It's not going to affect my community. It's not going to affect my church. That's how we begin to think.

[23 : 09] But that's just not the case. Sin has a much wider impact on that. And there's no doubt about it. That's what we see here with Eicham. And there's lots of other examples. Think of King David.

King David, he fell into a man after Rod's own heart. He fell into tremendous sin. And even though eventually he repented and he was forgiven for that sin, the consequences were far-reaching.

It affected his family, his own son, and his relationship with his son. It affected the whole nation of Israel. You see how sin, even when it's repented of and forgiven, it has consequences.

And the same is true for lots of other biblical examples as well. You can go through many of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah, and you can see how their sins affected the whole nation. And their sin actually had an impact on the wider nation itself.

And that's why we ought never to turn a blind eye to sin. Especially in ourselves, but even in other people as well. Now, you have to be more careful, of course, with dealing with other people.

[24 : 12] And you have to do so in a loving way. Not in a judgmental way. But ignoring sin doesn't help anyone. It doesn't help the person, and it doesn't help the wider cause of Christ either.

So never turn a blind eye to sin. Especially your own, but also even in the lives of others, of the Lord's people. So now we know why Israel has suffered this defeat.

The problem is sin. And secondly, and more briefly, I want to move on to look at how God deals with this sin. So how does this sin get dealt with?

And God tells Joshua here that the sinner must be identified and destroyed. That's what he says. That's pretty severe, isn't it?

And we can perhaps struggle to read things as severe as the punishment that we have in this passage. And the reason for that is, again, it's because we have a low view of sin.

[25 : 12] Because we don't think sin really should be punished. And when you come to a passage like this from that point of view, you think, well, God has been a little bit harsh here. We feel he's being too strict in what he's doing.

But as we saw this morning, God is absolutely just. And sin absolutely must be punished. And we saw that with the Canaanites. They were an evil idolatrous people deserving of the judgment of God.

God, as we saw, was not being unfair or unjust in bringing about a judgment over the people of Canaan there. And here, Israel are not immune to that either.

It's one thing the Canaanites sinning and being judged. But don't think Israel is immune to that. Not at all. And arguably, Israel are actually held to greater account because of the blessings that they have received as being part of the covenant community of God.

Now, relative to the sins of the Canaanites, what Eichen's done seems like a small thing, as I said. It seems like a small thing, but it's not.

[26 : 23] God sees this as a grievous sin because he has sinned as a covenant member of the people of God. See, that's the difference. The Canaanites were not covenant members, and they sinned and they were judged.

But in a sense, it's even worse when the Israelites do because they are people who have taken part of the blessings of being in this covenant of grace. When you are sinning against the light, which is what this is, when you're sinning against the light, how much darker that sin is.

When you're sinning knowingly, knowingly breaking what the Lord has commanded. And that's what we have here. And that's a solemn lesson to ourselves as well because we live in a culture, in the islands here especially, where many people, they know the law of God.

I know you could argue nowadays that many people don't, but generally speaking, the vast number of people are aware of the law of God. They know what God's law is, and they know when they're breaking it.

And that's incredibly solemn because they ignore it anyway. They know it, but they reject it. Now, there are other parts of this world where they don't really know the law of God. And they too break it, and that doesn't excuse them.

[27 : 38] But there's an added weight and there's an added darkness about sinning when you know that it's wrong. Sinning especially when you're part of the covenant community of God. And here this sin is committed by a covenant member of the people of Israel.

And because of that, it's dealt with in a very serious and in a very decisive manner indeed. Now, the Lord doesn't deal with every sin in this way.

And that's true. The Lord exercises his common grace and he delays judgment until judgment day itself. That's generally how the Lord works.

He doesn't come in judge all sin. He delays that judgment to the judgment day itself. But from time to time, he brings that judgment forward into time. He brings that judgment forward on the Canaanites, for example, and he does it here with Eisham as well.

To be a reminder to the people that yes, the Lord is patient and long-suffering, the sin will be punished and that's why he shows this. And he shows us that here in this passage.

[28 : 44] It's a wee bit as well, like in Saffira and Ananias as well. Remember in the New Testament, early on in the New Testament church, remember they lied, they lied about money.

And when they lied, they were both struck down dead. Now, there's more to that than just a point I'm looking at. That was done as an example to the people of the serious nature of sin.

God wasn't going to strike down every liar that ever entered into the church. We know that's not the case. But he did there for a number of reasons, but one of which was to show the people what God thought of sin.

God's view of sin hadn't changed, in other words, in the New Testament compared to the old. Sometimes people think it has. It hasn't changed. The Lord's view of sin remains the same. And that's the kind of thing that's going on here with Achan.

Here they are at the beginning stages of occupying the promised land, just entering into the land of Canaan. And the Lord shows exactly what he thinks of sin here by dealing with it in this serious way.

[29 : 48] So God says here, the sinner needs to be distraught. And Joshua follows this process, which eventually leads to the identifying of this man here, Achan.

And you'll notice that, see when the selection process is going on, they all know the reason for it. But when the selection process is going on, Achan doesn't step out and say, don't bother, it was me.

He doesn't. He waits for the whole process to unfold. And it's not until, when he's cornered, effectively, that he actually admits that what he has done is wrong.

So it's clear that he hoped his sin would remain hidden. But as I said earlier, there's no such thing as a secret sin. As the word of God reminds us, be sure your sin will find you out.

That's a solemn phrase. And it's one of those phrases that sends a shiver down our spine every time we read it. Beware your sin will find you out. But of course, for the Lord's people, we don't need to worry because our sin has been covered by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[30 : 55] But if we're outside of Christ, then we do need to worry. Then we do need to have that shivering down our spines. The thought that our sin will one day find us out. And what you have here as well in the selection process that's going on, it's really a picture of what it will be like on the judgment day, isn't it?

That's essentially what this is. Because we might think that we can hide our sin, but on that judgment day, there's no hiding. There's no hiding at all. For all those who are outside of Christ, on that judgment day, a process will unfold.

And all of that sin, which is you're trying to hide and all that guilt, which you try and hide in your heart, and you try and hide it in the inner recesses of your heart, it's all going to come out.

It doesn't matter if you can hide it from your own conscience or from others. On this day, on the judgment day itself, it'll be like this. It'll be like this. And the Lord will bring it out and He will lay our sin before us.

And that's why it's so important to come and plead for mercy and salvation now. Before we're, as it were, cornered, like Echan is here, we need to come seeking forgiveness in the Gospel while we have the chance.

[32 : 08] While the Gospel message of the Lord Jesus Christ is opened up before us and the mercy of God is offered to us, we need to take it now. Because by the judgment day, it'll be too late.

And here, it was too late for this man, Echan, and he doesn't repent or seek mercy until after. Of course, he's identified and after, he confesses.

And you make sure you don't wait until that point. You don't wait until the point where you're cornered and where your sin is opened up before you. You seek that forgiveness now while it is on offer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So Echan is identified and he confesses. And in verse 21, look at verse 21, and he says, he's telling us there what happened. When I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar and 200 shekels of silver and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them.

Now, I want you to notice the process of sin there. Notice I saw, then I coveted, then I took. It's very similar to Eve, isn't it? In the Garden of Eden, that process of sin is very similar.

[33 : 24] And it's a reminder to us that sin isn't actually, well, it is a one-off action, but it isn't just a one-off action. Sin is a process. Sin never really is seen in isolation.

Sin works in a process of sins, in multiple sins. There's a chain reaction almost always with sin. And James actually tells us that in the New Testament.

And James in chapter one, we read this, but each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desire and enticed. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin.

And sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death. See, the process starts with a wee glimpse, a wee thought, a second glimpse, just a second thought.

And before we actually know what the desire develops, and then we fall head first into sin. That's the process. That's how the devil works. You see, the devil does not present sin like one giant step of a mountain.

[34 : 27] That's not how he presents sin. He presents sin like little steps downwards. He doesn't say step off the edge of a cliff. He makes a wee step, then another wee step, and another wee step.

And by the time we get down there and look up, we realise we're in the depths of sin. That's how the devil works. It's a process. And that's the process that we see here with Echan. I don't know if you've heard the fable about the boiling frog.

The fable goes, I don't know if there's any truth in it, but it's a fable anyway. So the fable goes that if you're trying to boil a frog, if you put a frog in boiling water, it'll jump out straight away.

Straight away. As soon as you put it in, it'll jump out. It won't go in there. But if you put it in cold water, and if you heat it up slowly, then what happens is he gets lulled into asleep, and eventually he dies there in the boiling water.

And the implication is that the gentle warming of the water draws him in. He falls asleep, and then he boils to death. And that's exactly what it's like for the Christian in regard to sin.

[35 : 34] The devil doesn't just throw massive temptations out of him. It's always a process. It's always a little temptation. Here, and a little temptation there, before eventually we find ourselves falling into the very depths of sin itself.

So we need to understand the way the devil works, and the way sin works. We need to understand that sin is often a process. And this solemn narrative here, it ends with the destruction of Echan and his whole family and everything he owns.

So you think sin is not a big deal. Well, all I can say is you need to turn to passages like this, and here we learn that sin is never hidden. Sin has consequences that are far-reaching, not just in our lives, but in the lives of others.

And sin absolutely must be punished. That's what we learn from this passage. And that ought to be a deterrent for the Lord's people.

That ought to be a deterrent to sin. And through the Spirit enabling us to resist, we ought to look at sin and think, no, I need to see its darkness, see how it operates, see how it affects more than me, but those around me, and use that as a deterrent from falling into the groups of sin.

[36 : 52] But also, perhaps more importantly, the more that you see the blackness of sin, and the more that you see how terrible it is, the more wonderful and the more glorious the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is.

Because in the gospel we have forgiveness, we have cleansing, and we have one who has taken that punishment in the Lord Jesus Christ. Sin has to be punished, but in Christ we have one who has taken that punishment.

And see, to focus on sin is not something heavy, and something doer, and something that depresses us. If we see the difficulty and blackness and darkness of sin, we're going to see more of the glory of what Christ has done for us.

We need to make that connection. A low view of sin is going to result in a low view of what Christ has done. A low view of sin is going to result in a low view of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

If you're wondering why you don't think the atonement is that special, or if you're wondering why what Christ has done is not as important to you as it once was, probably that's the reason why.

[37 : 58] Because your view of sin has gone down. If we see sin for what it is, then we will see more of the wonder and the glory of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done.

And here, at the very end, we see the very last couple of verses there, he suffered for his sin. And what happens when he suffers? Well, we see there that the anger of the Lord is removed from Israel, just like that.

And you know, that's a wonderful picture of what Christ himself has done for us, isn't it? Even in Eicham, we see something of what Christ has done. Because Christ suffered for sin as well.

He didn't suffer for his own sin like Eicham did, but he suffered for the sins of his people. And as a result of that suffering, the anger of the Lord is removed from the Lord's people, just like you see here with Eicham.

And now we can call ourselves the righteous children of God. So for those of us in here tonight who are the Lord's, don't have a low view of sin. Do not have a low view of sin.

[39 : 01] See it for what it is in all its darkness. One, so that it will be a deterrent to you from sinning. But secondly, so that we might see even more of the glory of the gospel and the glory of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done.

And if you are in here tonight and you are outside of Christ, then I hope that you also see the seriousness of sin. I hope that you are filled with conviction.

And I hope that you are filled with guilt. Not that I want you to be convicted or that I want you to be filled with guilt, just because if that is the case, then you are ready to hear the gospel. Then you are ready to hear the good news about what the Lord Jesus Christ has done.

That's why I want every one of you who are outside of Christ to be aware of that sin. Because then you will be ready to embrace the gospel and put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So I hope that the Lord reveals your sin to you today, that you see what that sin deserves, and that might drive you to your knees seeking salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we give you thanks for the gospel. We give you thanks that for the gospel to be good news, we first have to see the bad news.

[40 : 24] And the bad news is indeed the blackness and the darkness of sin. And we see something of that in that passage that we studied there this evening. The nature of sin, the way it is all encompassing, the way it starts with a look, and a coveting, and eventually drawn into all sorts of sin, which then takes the anger of God and that begins to affect even those who are around us, and even our churches and our communities.

Help us to acknowledge the effect of sin. But at the same time help us not to be merely under the cloud of conviction and darkness, but help us through the darkness to see more brightly the wonderful light of the Lord Jesus Christ and the offer of salvation which we find in the gospel.

And our prayer today is that not only you would show us our sin, but more than that, that you would show us the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose blood is able to cleanse even the darkest sins which lie in the innermost recesses of our souls.

Oh Lord, we thank you for our crucified and our resurrected Lord and Savior, and may each of us bow our knee to you this evening.

So cleanse us, help us to modify the sin within us, help us to flee from it and to be ever repenting and turning to you for Jesus' sake. Amen.

[41 : 51] We're going to bring our service to a conclusion by singing in Psalm 51 in the Scottish Sauter.

Psalm 51. And we're going to sing ever seven to twelve, there do thou with his lips sprinkle me I shall be cleansed so you wash thou me and then I shall be wider than the snow, a wonderful picture of God coming.

And yes, we are black with sin, but he washes us and he cleanses us in the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to make us as white as the snow itself. So we'll sing those verses there, seven for seven to twelve.

To God's place. Do thou with his lips sprinkle me I shall be cleansed so you wash thou me and then I shall be wider than the snow, a wonderful picture of God coming.

Oh, bloodless, heart of joyfulness, make me to hear the voice, that so this very voice may sound, and so these very votes which now has broken very joyous.

[43 : 57] All my inequities blow down, my face I throw on my sin.

It is that we are glorying you, it is that we are glorying you, our eyes with me with them.

Cast me not from thy side nor take, thy holy spirit away, restore me thy salvation's joy, restore me thy salvation's joy with thy priest's worthy sin.

The grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.