

#75 “Why Original Sin Matters”

by Brent Barnett

www.relevantbibleteaching.com

Unredeemed man has always been self-interested, and it has never been his natural bent to look after the weak and to give up his own rights for the benefits of others (unless, of course, there is some kick-back to fuel pride or one’s own selfish agenda). Scripture is plain that man is born a sinner, saying in 1 Corinthians 15:22, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.” Isaiah 53:6 adds, “All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.” All people sin and fall short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23). Therefore, we all need salvation through the one and only Savior Jesus Christ.

To believe that man is basically good and that he possesses a decency at his core makes the remedy for sin meaningless. Man must first recognize his sin before he can be saved, so those who deny sin propagate a great deception about the natural bent of man’s heart. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?” The Bible doesn’t buy into the jargon about man being basically good but not perfect. The Bible speaks of utter deceit and extreme wickedness, a nature that is set against God and His ways of humility, love, selflessness, and faith in Christ. This reality of man’s evil bent must be understood, believed, and proclaimed lest the gospel lose its worth and meaning and the death of Christ be made a mockery. Our sins were laid upon Christ so that we could receive His righteousness. We don’t merely need some polishing up on our exterior because of a good core and loving heart, but we need to be born again. We need our heart changed (Ezekiel 18:31), our mind transformed (Romans 12:1-2), and our spirits regenerated (Titus 3:5). Man’s only hope is a total rewiring of his inner person, a work which only Christ can do.

A person must learn of his sin problem before the salvation answer makes any sense. This is why the doctrine of original sin is so important: without it, man has no need for a Savior and has no motive to call upon Christ (unless of course it is one of self-interest such as in getting richer, smarter, stronger, etc.). The gospel is not about self-help or furthering our own inherent self-worship (i.e. pride and self-reliance). The gospel is about denying ourselves and turning to Christ as Savior and Lord (Matthew 16:24). Original sin must be dealt with if a person is going to be born again, and only Christ has the cure. Yet we have the message.

It is our job, our mission, and our calling to tell the world that it is sick with sin and that it needs a Doctor. As Jesus said in Luke 5:31, “It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick.” Telling the world it is spiritually sick with sin often doesn’t go over too well, and it is not popular. But it can be done gently and lovingly as we lead people through the Scripture and let the Spirit speak to their hearts about where they have fallen short. For those who desire the truth, they will be cut to the heart and repent (Acts 2:37). Others will be cut to the heart and gnash their teeth in anger (Acts

7:54). Either way, the Word of God does what God says it will do, cutting to joints and marrow and rightly judging the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). Our job is simply to share the truth of the gospel. Preaching with hate is destructive to the message of grace, but helping one to see the problem of sin which we all possess as we enter the world is an act of great love and care as it opens the door to the gift of salvation being necessary and making sense.

Those who proclaim the inherent goodness of man are greatly deceived, and they are unable (or unwilling) to see (or at least acknowledge) the true state of their own hearts. It is a great deception and delusion to not see that our own attempts at righteousness are as filthy rags before God (Isaiah 64:6). We need to, like Isaiah, come to see our own need for grace and for cleansing (Isaiah 6:5). There is bad news before the good news, so let us make sure that in sharing the good news of the gospel that we remember to deal with the reality of sin. Then, grace will be beautiful as God intended it to be. “Just as it is written, ‘HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!’” (Romans 10:15). Praise God for the good and beautiful truth that, though we are born into sin, we can be saved from it!