

The Gift of Sin

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[0 : 0 0] In the 20-plus years that I was a police officer, there's no way that I can guess how many calls for the police that I responded to.

It was everything. There's no way that I can guess.

Fall out is a byproduct of a fallen life. In fact, most of the people problems that police deal with are the direct response of the fallen state of this world.

Sin is the reason police exist. Sin is the reason police exist. Sin is the reason police exist. Sin is the reason police exist. I'm going to spare you the gory details and the graphic details of this call.

But it was a cold December night. It was so cold that when the officers who responded to this call along with me gathered for the trial of this suspect, the thing that we were talking about in the room that they had us in prior to our testimony, we talked about how cold it was that night.

[1 : 3 8] I tell you that to give you hope in these days of heat, that there is cold weather coming. But I was a field training officer, which meant that I trained rookies who came on the force.

And we got the call, and we were en route, and I already had recognized the address as being one that I had gone to many times.

It involved the ex-husband showing up to his ex-wife's house and trying to make contact with her. She had a restraining order against him, which should, at least legally, prevent him from making contact with her.

But he showed up many times in violation of the restraining order, so she would call the police. We would come out and have to deal with him if he was still there. Most of the times, he was not.

One time, he drove his car through the front of the house because he couldn't get her to come to the door. So we are en route to this residence, which is right up Highway 14 behind the IHOP in that neighborhood.

[2 : 4 9] And as we're going, I'm telling my rookie, be prepared. There's no telling what we're going to find when we get there. It's always something different, but it always involves this guy trying to make contact with his wife.

We're not far away, and I knew we were going to be the first unit on the scene, and we got more information about what was going on. A neighbor spotted a body in the back of the yard.

A shot had been fired, so we knew it was going to be serious. We arrived at the scene. A neighbor meets us in the driveway. A neighbor says he was the ex-husband.

He was here. We heard a gunshot. We came out. We saw a body in the backyard, and we called you. We advised that person to go back inside. We waited for more units to come so we could clear the area.

Once we were certain that he was gone, then we made our approach to the back of the house and found her dead in the backyard. As I said, I want to spare you the graphic details of all that went on before that happened, but the bad thing that happened was that all of this was done in front of their nine-year-old daughter, who was sitting in the living room watching TV.

[4 : 02] Fortunately, he was found shortly and arrested and stood trial for the murder of his ex-wife.

Police officers see things they shouldn't have to see because people do things that they shouldn't ought to do, and things happen that shouldn't ought to happen.

But they do, and they will. As long as we live on this side of the rapture, we're going to experience the effects of a fallen world, fallen people, and fallout from both.

Politicians, pastors, police, and people have been dealing with this issue of a fallen world ever since the world fell.

When two people failed shortly after the creation of people, fallout began. And it continues today.

[5 : 14] That one bite from the forbidden fruit, the command from God not to eat the fruit from this particular tree, turned the world upside down.

We think it was an apple. We don't know. We don't know what it was. The Bible just says whatever kind of fruit that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil grows, whatever that is, that's the fruit that Adam and Eve ate.

But think about it. Look at everything that happened in just a very short span of time after the creation of people.

On what day were people created of the six days of creation? Six?

Six? Yeah, it was the last day. People were the last thing God created. Either he was preparing the world for the people, which is actually the fact, or he was putting it off for as long as he could.

[6 : 22] Both Adam and Eve, newly created creatures, went downhill very quickly. Eve listened to the lives of Satan. Eve believed the lives of Satan.

Eve acted on the belief of the lies she heard, and she disobeyed God. And immediately she talked Adam into disobeying God too.

Then there was everything else that sin involves. There was blaming, shaming, and there were consequences as a result. A domino effect.

Now here's a question, and you don't have to respond, don't have to hold up your hand or say anything. Just a question for you to think about. Here's the question, how many of you struggle with sin?

Your answer should be, me. Yes, me, I do. Because if you're not struggling with sin, one of two things are true about you.

[7 : 24] Number one, either you're a child of God and your sin has become so much of a habit in your life that you have just disregarded it as sin. Or number two, you're not a child of God to begin with.

If you're a child of God and you struggle with sin, then this message is for you. If you're not a child of God, then see me later.

The title of my message this morning for you is The Gift of Sin. The Gift of Sin. I was telling Barbara, my Barbara, my wife Barbara, yesterday what my message was going to be, and she looked at me as if, you know, I was crazy.

The Gift of Sin. Am I crazy? Well, yes, but that's a story for another day. But the Gift of Sin, that should get you to thinking about what I'm going to talk about this morning.

Can sin be a gift? In fact, can sin be a gift from God? That's what I'm going to talk to you about this morning.

[8 : 29] And we're going to take a look at just one verse, and maybe it's the most powerful verse in at least the New Testament, maybe in all of the Bible. It's 2 Corinthians 5.21.

2 Corinthians 5.21. And I've only got one verse for you this morning. I thought about here a hallelujah or amen or something, but...

Amen. Thank you. And let me tell you the reason why, if you were here on Wednesday night, the pastor shared that he was having difficulty trying to scale down about 40 verses of Acts into a less than two-hour sermon.

And so when I thought about what I was going to do this morning, one verse compared to 40, that I might get an amen this morning when I tell you this is one verse.

2 Corinthians 5.21. For he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him.

[9 : 37] I love the songs that we sang this morning. Jeremy, you know, when I practiced Wednesday night, not knowing that I was going to be speaking today, yesterday when I got the text from the pastor saying he was not going to be here today, would I fill in?

And I started in my mind thinking about what I could say and what I would do. I blocked out all the songs we had practiced Wednesday and just focused completely on the message I had today.

But this morning as we sang those songs, I thought, man, how the Holy Spirit works. Because you're going to see as I unfold this message this morning that the songs go with this message.

I have a friend, a close friend of mine, who told me one time that sometimes he goes days without sinning. I didn't say this, but what I wanted to say was I didn't realize you'd been in a coma.

Romans 3.23 confirms what we already know as believers. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And John says that if we say that we don't sin, we're what?

[10 : 58] Liars. So my friend was lying, either lying or lying in a coma. And by the way, sin is not limited to what we do, but it includes what we think.

Not only is it what we do, what we think, but it's also the words we say. It's not only what we do, but it's also the motivation behind what we do.

If you say I'm going to get you for doing that to me, you're guilty of at least two things, the getting and the thought that made you get him. I have just two points for you this morning, Jason.

That's a private joke between me and Jason. He believes every message should have a title, a declarative statement, three points and a poem. But come back tonight.

I've got a three-point message for tonight, Jason. But this morning, just two. I tried to make it three, but there's only two points in that one verse. The gift of sin.

[12 : 04] Point number one, Jesus is the reason. The reason. Let's look at the first half of that verse once again. For he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us.

I want you to catch what this means. He. Who is he? God. Made him, who is him? Jesus. To be sin for who?

Us. This is a transactional statement. The issue is sin. The solution is a transaction. It begins with God.

It ends with us. And between God and us is Jesus. Jesus is what makes this transition between God and us possible. In other words, without Jesus, we could not have a relationship with God.

We can all agree on that. We know that. That's foundational to our belief. Now listen closely. We are created in the image of God.

[13 : 15] Is God free to choose to do whatever he wants to do? Yes. He's God. God does whatever he wants to do. Now listen. If we are created in the image of God, are we free to do whatever we want to do?

Can you do whatever you want to do? Yeah. You can do whatever you want to do. We have a free will courtesy of Almighty God.

That's how he made us. He took a risk and gave us free will. And sometimes we choose wisely. Sometimes we don't. God didn't coerce, force, instigate, entice the circumstances for Adam and Eve to be disobedient.

James tells us that God does not tempt us. It was their choice. And they made an unwise choice. And they suffered the consequences. And we're still suffering those consequences today.

Did God put a fence around the tree? He just said, look. Look at all these other trees. Look at that one, that one. Look at that one way over there. That one, that one, that one.

[14 : 28] All those trees you're free to eat from, but not that one. Bingo. Didn't take long for Adam and Eve to make a bad decision.

We don't even see in Scripture if they even tried the other trees or the other fruit. All these trees, all this fruit, they could have had all they wanted.

But they chose this one they were commanded not to eat from. Sometimes it's like that with us. We see all the good choices. You could do this, that'll be good.

Do this, that'll be good. One bad choice. And that's the one we choose. But the Bible is clear. Whatever path we do choose, the consequences will follow.

Good and bad. Now right before this verse in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 or several other verses that support this fact that sin is the reason for Jesus, we know that God has no need for us to be reconciled to Him.

[15 : 38] God does not need us. But we desperately need Him. And Jesus is the reason that we get to know God. This whole thing of sin being introduced into the perfect world that God made was not a surprise to God.

If God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipotent, and omnipresent, if He knows all, sees all, is all powerful, then He knew that Adam and Eve are going to make a bad choice.

God knows when we are going to make a bad choice before we make it. Me and you committing a sin is not a surprise to God.

And, are you ready for this? We shouldn't be surprised when a fellow believer sins either. We shouldn't be shocked when a pastor falls.

It's sad. He made a wide choice. But Jesus was the plan all along for disobedience.

[16 : 48] And are you ready for this? Without Jesus, we would be without God. But it's deeper than that. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us. Now think about this.

Think about how much sin affects you as a child of God. Think about that. The consequences. The conviction. Maybe some guilt. We know the feelings of what it's like when we sin.

Or at least we should. Jesus knew nothing about how it felt to sin. Or the consequences of sin. Or the domino effect of sin.

Sin was foreign to Jesus. He lived in a sinless environment. Jesus Christ, Son of God in the flesh, could not experience sin like we do because He knew no sin.

It is clear Jesus was not a sinner because He did not sin. What this means is Jesus, who was sinless when He was on earth, was treated like He was not.

[17 : 52] He was treated like we should be treated. He was beaten. He was nailed to a cross. And He died. He did it for us. But it should have been us.

It's called the doctrine of imputation. And we see that in verse 19 of chapter 5. Look at verse 19. That is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

That's the transactional part of this verse. Which brings me to the second of my two points. First, He's the reason. Second, He's the, we are the recipient.

We are the recipient. If he who knew no sin had to experience sin, then the question is why? Why did Jesus have to experience sin? The answer is us.

The last part of verse 21. That we might become righteousness of God in Him. John 3.16, right?

[19 : 08] Now this is the good stuff. We can stand before God sinless just like Christ is sinless because Jesus took our sin upon Himself, suffered, paid the price, the penalty is paid, and we are righteous.

Meaning, we are in right standing with God. God will never bring up our sins, past, present, or future. Satan will.

Satan is very good at reminding us of how bad we are, or can be, or have the potential to be. All the sins we have committed, Satan will bring those up time after time to tell us that we're not worthy to be a child of God.

And He's going to continue to do that because Satan only sees the outside, the corrupt body that we have to wear around. God not only has wiped away our sins because of what Jesus did on our behalf, but He threw away the book that listed all those sins, too.

In God's eyes, no record exists of our sins. In the Old Testament, sins were covered.

[20 : 16] In the New Testament, the blood of Jesus took our sins away. There's no sins to be covered because there's no sins there. You get that?

We are free. Any of you played Monopoly or have played Monopoly? What is the one card that you want? Get out of jail free card.

Now, we got one better. We got a get out of hell free card. God will never judge us for our sin. God will never judge you. God's wrath will never touch you.

The case is closed. You're found not guilty. There's no possibility for a retrial or evidence to be brought up again. It's over. Well, children of God go out there and start acting like it.

More on that in just a second as I close. Yes, we're going to drag this body around or this body is going to drag us around. This body is going to drag us down. But Jesus is the reason that we are the recipient.

[21 : 24] Is sin a gift? I think without sin, life would be boring. It makes us realize who we are. But more than that, it makes us realize who he is.

We need him. And sin makes us realize how much we do. I think it is a gift. If God created us in his image and he has a free will, he has given us a free will too, it gives us the opportunity what life would be like if that's what we did all the time, just sin.

If we were unbelievers, then that was our life. But here's what we can realize. Sin gives us a glimpse into what we need. And what we need is Jesus.

Imagine our lives without Jesus. Paul likes to use the phrase, in Christ. In Christ. What does that mean? Well, somehow a pick, one of my picks landed up here.

And so let's say this is Jesus. And let's say this pick is us. We are in Christ just like this. Just like that.

[22 : 37] Signed with the blood of Jesus. Sealed by the Holy Spirit. Meaning nothing can touch us. And we'll be delivered into the presence of God. Because of Jesus.

Paul also likes to use the phrase of this body as a tent. Are tents generally permanent dwellings? They're temporary. You put them up and you take them down.

That's how Paul referred to our body as tents. They're temporary dwellings. One day they're going to be folded up, put away. And we're going to fly away and be with Jesus.

We're not going to be judged for our sins. It's been taken care of. What will we be judged on? On judgment day.

Let's look at verse 20 and then we're done. Verse 20 comes right before 21, by the way.

[23 : 49] Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God were pleading through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf. Be reconciled to God. We're the recipients so that we can be ambassadors.

So we're going to be in heaven on that judgment day being judged on our ambassadorship. Remember I said a couple of minutes ago to go out there and act like you're a child of God?

And so let me ask you this. What are you doing for God? What are you doing for God? What are you doing for God? What are you doing for God? Are you doing anything for God?

That's what we as believers will be judged on. It's the reason Jesus came. So that we can be the recipients of all that he wants us to be. So there I was running radar on Ryan Street.

And where I sat, it was a popular spot for me to sit on Ryan Street. The old Trinity Baptist Church location in their parking lot.

[25 : 07] The speed limit there on Ryan is 30 miles an hour. Nobody drives 30 miles an hour on Ryan Street. Not then, not now. I don't even drive 30 miles an hour.

So this vehicle passes me going 70. That's a weird street to be going 70 miles an hour on. So pull out. Takes me about five blocks to catch up to the person.

It was a young lady and another young lady. And I said, you're going 70 miles an hour? She said, yeah, I just got a call from my daughter's school. She's sick and they want me to come get her and pick her up.

And I said, oh my goodness. I said, well, I want you to get there safely. So I'm going to ask you to just slow down. I'm not going to give you a ticket, but to slow down. And I said, I'll tell you what. Let's pray for your daughter.

So right there on the side of the road, I prayed for her daughter. And I prayed for her. I said, Lord, help her to remember that there's a speed limit for a reason. And so that she could arrive safely.

[26 : 16] And so I finished praying. And I made it a short prayer so she could get on and go get her daughter. Well, the passenger, the young lady on the other side said, could you pray for me too? And I said, well, do I have time?

And the driver said, sure. So I'll go around to the other side and I'll pray for this. I said, well, you want me to pray about it? I said, I don't know. Just pray for me. As a police officer, I experienced a lot of those God-given opportunities to be an ambassador for him.

The point I want to make is that police officers are not. Car repairman, doctor, oil industry, whatever you do, wherever you are, God is going to present opportunities for you to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ.

My question for you this morning is, what are you going to do with it? As I thought about this message, is sin a gift?

I think it is. Because it helped us to realize who Jesus is and what we would be like if it wasn't for him. Let's pray. Father, first we want to pray for Brother Bart.

[27 : 28] We pray that you are in the process of healing him right now so that he can get back to the church he loves and the church that loves him. I thank you for the opportunity I've had today to share what you gave me yesterday in a shorter period of time.

I pray that it tickles some ears this morning and suck into some hearts. Father, we'd be hopeless and helpless without Jesus Christ and for the penalty he paid on our behalf.

It was your plan all along. It's clear that Jesus is the reason for the Bible to let us know who he is and what he was going to do. And he did exactly that. And he's going to do exactly what is left for him to do in the future.

It's clear that what was prophesied in the past came to pass and what was prophesied for Jesus when he was on earth came to pass as well. We have no doubt that what is prophesied in the future will come to pass too.

Our hope is in that because since everything else has come true, what's in the future will come true as well. Help us to hold fast to the belief that Jesus is coming back and it could be today.

[28 : 36] And until that time, we're grateful for the fact that Jesus is the reason. And we're grateful even more for the fact that we are the recipient of everything Jesus did on our behalf. I pray for our afternoon that we spend some time with each other, our families, and that we spend some time with you.

And we get some rest as well. In Jesus' name, amen.