

Doctrine of Sin

- What is sin?
- Consequences of sin
- Origin of sin
- Nature of sin
- Original sin
- Contemporary application

© 2008 Brenda B. Colijn

1

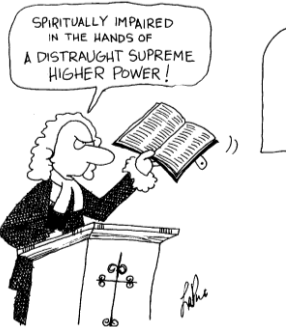
What is Sin?

- Hamartiology = doctrine of sin.
- From Greek word *hamartia* (sin).

2

What is Sin?

Why do we have trouble talking about sin?



"A politically correct Jonathan Edwards"

3

What is Sin?

- Our society rejects the category of sin.
 - Karl Menninger, *Whatever Became of Sin?*
 - Considered to be judgmental, intolerant today.
 - Guilt redefined (post-Freud) as guilt feelings.
 - Do we teach “sin management”?
 - Some preach on sin to incite hatred.
 - Do we have a superficial concept of salvation?

4

What is Sin?

- Eugene Peterson: Seeing people as sinners isn't judgmental but a theological truth.
- Balanced doctrine of sin can help explain the paradoxical human condition.
 - Created in the image of God, capable of great achievements and extraordinary good.
 - Fallen sinners, reflecting the character of their “father” the devil, capable of unthinkable evil.

5

What is Sin?

- Sin is universal (Rom. 3:23).
 - Personal
 - Corporate
 - Structural
 - Thorsen: “There is no such thing as the privatization of sins” (149).

6

Consequences of Sin

- A = Alienation from God, others, creation, self.
- B = Bondage to sin, Satan; bondage of will.
- C = Condemnation (judgment upon us)
 - Age of accountability for children?
 - Objective guilt, not guilt feelings.
 - We incur God’s wrath.

7 7

Consequences of Sin

- D = Depravity (corrupt nature)
 - Total depravity = affects all people, every aspect of a person, powerlessness to remedy our plight.
 - Doesn’t mean all people equally evil or people are as evil as they could possibly be.
 - Calvinists and Arminians agree on this.
- E = Eternal death (eternal separation from God)

8 8

Consequences of Sin

- Some see three stages of death:
 - Physical death: end of physical life.
 - Spiritual death: separation from God.
 - Eternal death: spiritual death at physical death.
- Was humanity created mortal?
 - Pelagius, R. Niebuhr: mortal.
 - Grenz: finite but not mortal.
 - Erickson: conditional immortality.

9 9

Consequences of Sin

- Death is in the world because of sin.
 - It's not part of God's creation intentions for us.
 - This is why we find it so hard to accept!
 - Christ has begun to reverse the reign of death through his resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20-26).
 - Death will be defeated (1 Cor. 15:26).
 - Death can't separate us from God's love (Rom. 8:38-39). It bring us to Christ (2 Cor. 5:8).
 - We will be raised, too (1 Cor. 15:54-57).

10₁₀

Consequences of Sin

- Consequences of sin are dealt with in salvation:
 - A = Alienation ⇨ Reconciliation (Rom. 5:10)
 - B = Bondage ⇨ Redemption (Rom. 8:2)
 - C = Condemnation ⇨ Justification (Rom. 5:18)
 - D = Depravity ⇨ Regeneration (Rom. 6:4-6)
 - E = Eternal death ⇨ Eternal life (Rom. 6:23)

11₁₁

Consequences of Sin

- Traditionally humanity's relationship to sin has been described in four stages:
 - Creation: *posse [non] peccare* (able [not] to sin)
 - Fall: *non posse non peccare* (not able not to sin)
 - Redemption: *posse non peccare* (able not to sin)
 - Consummation: *non posse peccare* (not able to sin)

12₁₂

Origin of Sin

- Paul: “one man” (Adam) – Rom. 5:12.
 - This is a volitional view: misuse of free will.
 - Ignorance view (Pelagius): we don’t know any better.
 - Soul-making view (Irenaeus): necessary for growth and maturity.
 - Existential view (Niebuhr): anxiety of finiteness.

13

Nature of Sin

- Sin = inner force, inherent condition, controlling power.
- Sins = individual wrong acts.
- Biblical words: violation of divine standards, rebellion, ignorance or error, unfaithfulness, evil.
- Most frequent words = *chatha*, *hamartia*.
- Greek word *hubris* (defiant pride) is rare.

14

Nature of Sin

- Suggestions: sensuality, selfishness, idolatry, pride, discontent, finitude.
- Biblical words suggest failure to live up to God’s standards.
- Thorsen: “any thought, word, or action that offends the righteousness of God or God’s intentions for our lives” (149).
- We can sin by commission or omission.

15

Nature of Sin

- Western Church: crime and punishment.
- Eastern Church: disease and healing.
- “Mortal” vs. “venial” sins (Catholic).
- “Seven Deadly Sins”: pride, envy, wrath, lust, avarice, gluttony, sloth.
- Some have suggested that the essence of sin is different for men and women.
- Legal or relational? Personal or social?

16

Original Sin

- Paul traced sin to Adam (Rom. 5:12).
- Theologians express this as original sin.
 - First sin (Adam and Eve).
 - Fundamental problem shared by all human beings (underneath specific acts of sin).

17

Original Sin

- Early church affirmed universality of sin.
- Augustine fully develops original sin idea.
 - We were in Adam when he sinned.
 - Humans are now a “lump of perdition.”
 - Augustine starts from infant baptism.
- Legal imputation idea developed in Reformation (impute Adam’s guilt to all people).
- Bondage of the will; total depravity.

18

Original Sin

- Theories of transmission of original sin:
- Federal headship (from *foedus*, covenant)
 - Legal relationship (Reformed).
 - We're bound by God's covenant with Adam.
 - Goes with creationist view of the soul.
- Natural or realistic headship (solidarity)
 - Biological (Augustine misread Romans 5:12).
 - We were in Adam when he sinned.
 - Goes with traducianist view of soul.

19

Original Sin

- Any theory that explains how sin gets from Adam to everybody is speculation!
- Debate over what original sin consists of:
 - Judicial guilt
 - Inherited corruption
 - Individual acts
- Age of accountability?

20

Original Sin

- Pelagianism denies guilt and corruption.
 - Moral concern; stressed free will.
 - Humanity has no corruption or guilt from Fall.
 - People can obey God by their own efforts.
 - Condemned at Council of Ephesus 431, Synod of Orange 529.
- Arminianism affirms inherited corruption.
 - We inherit corrupt nature, so we sin.
 - Prevenient grace removes guilt of original sin.

21

Original Sin

- Anabaptism - Christ paid for original sin.
 - Adam/Christ parallel suggests that Christ's work affected everyone in some way.
 - Christ removed guilt of original sin for all.
 - We still inherit corrupt nature and commit sins.
- Calvinism - legal imputation of guilt.
 - Adam sinned, so we're guilty.
 - We're also corrupt, and we sin, so we're more guilty.

22

Contemporary Application

- How should we address sin today?



23

Contemporary Application

- How should we address sin today?

24

Case Study

You are on the leadership board of a congregation that has been asked to allow a ministry for recovering homosexuals to meet in your building. The ministry is well respected by evangelical pastors in your area. Some members of your congregation support the idea. Others oppose it because they believe that the church should accept homosexual practice rather than supporting change ministries. Still others oppose it because they are afraid that the participants will become involved in your congregation. What do you do?

25
