

“Why Even One Sin Is Too Much”
(Romans 6:23)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

Last time,

We had just finished our series on Psalm 119

Dealing with the blessings of obedience.

Not only does the Law show us

How to love God –

Which He richly deserves for all love He’s shown us –

And our neighbor –

It also shows us

What we can expect God to give us

For that obedience.

All of these blessings

Are so many positive reasons

We should obey Him,

Besides the fact that we want to

Because we love Him by His Spirit.

B. Preview.

But there are other reasons –

Reasons we would consider more negative –

Even though God means well in giving them –

Things that have to do
With the consequences of disobedience.

Now let me begin by saying,
That if you've trusted Jesus –

Which you know you have
If you have repented of all your sins –

All your guilt is forgiven –
You will arrive safely in heaven.

But sometimes that fact has the tendency
To make us take sin too lightly –
To make us think it no longer matters.

Paul had to address this in his letter to the Romans.

He points out in Romans 6,
That God's grace is glorified

When He forgives our sins;

But he goes on to caution us

Not to use the fact that it is

As an excuse to sin:

“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?
May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it?” (vv. 1-2).

He writes in chapter 3

That both he and his companions

Were actually being accused

Of teaching this very thing.

“And why not *say* (as we are slanderously reported and as some claim that we say),
‘Let us do evil that good may come’? Their condemnation is just” (v. 8).

You don’t need to sin on purpose

To give God the opportunity

To glorify His grace in forgiving you –

He’ll have plenty of opportunities.

You are not to do evil

So that good will come of it.

If you have died with Christ to sin

And have been buried with Him –

Which you have,

If you’ve trusted Jesus Christ –

You can no longer live in sin.

Why not?

There are many answers to that question,

But this evening, I want to focus on just one:

Because you realize as a Christian

That allowing even one sin

In your life is too much.

Why is even one too much?

Let me suggest two reasons:

First, because every sin – even the least – deserves eternal punishment.

And second, because any sin you allow in your life – even the smallest you don't repent of – can destroy you forever.

II. Sermon.

A. As a Christian, you know that even one sin is too much

Because every sin – even the least – deserves eternal punishment.

Let me begin by saying,

That if you are a believer –

If you have taken Jesus at His Word,

If you are depending on Him alone,

On His righteousness alone,

To get you into heaven –

If you are repenting –

Turning from every sin,

Fighting against every sin –

Then all your sins are forgiven:

All you've done in the past,

All you've done in the present,

Every sin you'll ever commit in the future –

Not one of them will ever condemn you.

And you should thank God for that

Because apart from His mercy in sending His Son,
That never would have happened.

But you must never forget,
That even though your sins are forgiven,
Every single sin you commit –
Even the smallest –
Still would deserve condemnation.

It's true that Jesus has paid for them –
His death on the cross is enough,
More than enough,
Infinitely enough,
To wash all of your guilt away.

But apart from Jesus
Every single one of your sins,
Even the very least of them,
Even something as simple
As a wrong word spoken
Without thinking through its consequences,
Would still deserve eternal suffering.

Jesus says, “But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall
give an accounting for it in the Day of Judgment” (Matt. 12:36).

Don't forget that all it took

To condemn the whole human race

To everlasting destruction

Was the simple disobeying

Of a single command.

We read in our meditation:

“So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous” (Rom. 5:18-19).

And what was the command Adam disobeyed?

Not to eat of a particular tree:

“The LORD God commanded the man, saying, ‘From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die’” (Gen. 2:16-17).

But why not eat of that tree?

What’s the big deal?

The eating of that fruit

Seems like a relatively small thing

Compared to adultery or murder.

Why was the breaking of that one commandment

Enough to condemn us all?

It’s because of the One

It was committed against:

The infinitely holy God.

Eating fruit from a tree
Is a relatively minor thing,
Unless God says, “Don’t do it!”

What about the sins you commit?
Are they any less serious?
Has God changed?
Is He any less worthy?
No, He is still infinitely worthy.

Has His standard changed?
Is He less holy?
No. He still hates sin.

What has changed? Nothing.
Every sin still deserves eternal punishment
At the hands of our holy God,
Which is why
You and I should never take the breaking
Of any of His commandments lightly.

Do you allow any sin in your life?
If we’re honest with ourselves,
We’d all have to admit
That sometimes we do.

But should we?

Should we ever allow it?

What about those of you

Who have never trusted Jesus?

If the breaking of even one commandment

Deserves fiery punishment that lasts forever,

How much more all the sins you have committed.

Let that fact drive you to Jesus Christ.

If you will turn away from your disobedience,

And put your whole hope of entering heaven on Jesus alone,

He will forgive and receive you.

God said through Isaiah the prophet,

“Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the LORD, and He will have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (55:7).

The ministers at Westminster summarized this well

Where they wrote,

“As there is no sin so small but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent” (WCF 15.4).

B. But let's move on to the second reason

Why even one sin is too much,

And that's because any sin you allow in your life – even the smallest that you don't repent of – can destroy you forever.

There's a reason God wants you to obey,
There's a reason He wants you to repent of your sins.
We've just seen one: every sin deserves damnation
Because every sin is committed against infinite holiness.

But what happens
If you repent of some, but not others?
What if you obey some commands, but not all?
What if you hold onto one of your sins
And refuse to let it go?

Now I don't want you to misunderstand.
I'm not asking,
What if you continue to fall into sin?
Because we all do every day.
Even if we manage, by God's grace,
To do what He commands,
We're still going to fall short
In the motive department.
Our hearts still have sin in them,
And so there will still be sin
In everything we do.
Nor am I asking the question,

What if you continue to struggle with sin?

Because, if you're a believer,

You'll still struggle with sin every day.

Paul writes to the Galatians, "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please" (5:17).

What I'm asking is,

What if there's a sin

You refuse to give up –

Any sin –

Something you're doing

You know God forbids,

Or something you're not doing

That you know He commands?

What if you're not fighting to put that sin off,

Or not fighting to put that duty on?

What if you're perfectly happy with that situation?

What then?

John tells us, the practice of any sin

Is enough to destroy us.

He writes, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin. No one who abides in Him sins; no one

who sins has seen Him or knows Him. Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 John 3:2-9).

We all struggle to do what’s right.

We are all tempted and frequently fall into sin.

But if we’re true believers,

We continue to struggle;

We continue to get up when we fall;

We want to obey,

We want to overcome sin

Because we love God,

We love Jesus,

And by His Spirit,

We want to be like them –

Not just in some areas,

But in all areas.

So if we love anything that’s evil,

If we want to do something that’s wrong,

Something that God says is sin –

If we don’t hate that thing at all –

Whatever it may be –

And are perfectly content to continue in it,

What does that say of us?

It not only says that we love sin –

Which even we as believers do to some degree

Because of the sin that's still in our hearts –

It also says we really don't love what's right

As we thought we did –

Because if we loved what was right,

We would love it in all its forms,

In all its applications –

And we would hate everything

That's against it.

If we don't love what's right,

We will practice what's wrong.

If we practice what's wrong,

We're not born of God.

And if we're not born of God,

We will be destroyed for our sins.

John says, if you are born of God,

When once you come to see

That He requires something in His Word,

You will begin trying to do it;

And when you see He forbids something,
You will begin struggling to stop doing it.

So what is the state of your heart tonight?

Is there any sin that you love?

Any sin you practice?

That you're not willing to fight against, to put off?

That you're not willing to let go of?

Then you need to be very careful

Because that sin will destroy you

Unless you repent of it.

Listen again to what John writes,

“No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God” (3:9).

“Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; the one who practices sin is of the devil” (vv. 7-8).

This is not only true of sins that others can see,

It's even more so of sins they can't:

Jeremiah Burroughs writes, “Take heed of secret sins. They will undo you if loved and maintained: one moth may spoil the garment; one leak drown the ship; a penknife stab will kill a man as well as a sword; so one sin may damn the soul; nay, there is more danger of a secret sin causing the miscarrying of the soul than open profaneness, because not so obvious to the reproofs of the world; therefore take heed that secret sinnings eat not out good beginnings.”

What should you do

If you find yourself trapped

By the power of sin?

Go to Jesus in prayer.

Ask Him to break the power of that sin in your heart

And to give you the grace to believe.

Only He can.

He says, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin.

The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:34-36).

If you’re bound by sin,

Ask Jesus to set you free. Amen.

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