

...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembly together...but encouraging one another.
Heb 10:24-25

Share the teaching
Guard the sharing

Male Call

April 4, 2008—Atonement—Sin: A Christian Perspective

6:00 – 6:05	Coffee & Donuts Opening Prayer
6:05 – 7:00	<p>1) Review the problem: <i>As a rule, religions, philosophers, and social scientists agree that the world is not as it should be, that there is a problem with human existence individually and corporately.</i>¹</p> <p>a) Recall the four broken relationships—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) With God ii) With self iii) With others iv) With nature <p>b) Mk 7:14-23</p> <p>2) Popular traditional view of sin (Augustinian Doctrine of Original Sin):²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Human beings were created in a state of innocent perfection. Death was not in God’s original plan for humanity. b) Adam’s sin brought guilt upon his descendents; the guilt is transmitted through the male parent. c) The penalty of Adam’s sin is death for all of us. d) All humans, except Jesus (no biological father), bear the burden of this sin and penalty. e) Human beings are unable to live in accordance with God’s will. <p>3) How does this view fit your experience and understanding?</p> <p>4) Challenges of this view:³</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Text doesn’t support “fallen” view. Adam and Eve were God-like before <i>and after</i> eating the forbidden fruit. God created Adam in his own image (Gen 1:26). Man was naive (Gen 2:17). After eating the forbidden fruit and knowing good from evil, man was indeed in God’s image (3:22). How has man “fallen”? b) Exactly how is the “original sin” transmitted through my lineage? Why am I guilty of something Adam did?

¹ *Missing the Mark*, vii.

² *Ibid.* 2.

³ *Ibid.* 2-8.

	<p>i) Mistranslated verse—Romans 5:12:</p> <p>(1) Latin Vulgate (AD 382): Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world and by sin death: and so death passed upon all men, <i>in whom</i> all have sinned.</p> <p>(2) King James Version (1st ed, 1611):Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, <i>for that</i> all have sinned</p> <p>(3) Modern Translations: Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, <i>because all sinned</i>.</p> <p>c) Doesn't adequately account for the fact that most of us would not consider ourselves to be in open rebellion against God. Many Western non-Christians are in a state of apathy, not rebellion.</p> <p>d) Risks perpetuating the notion that those suffering or victimized or oppressed are somehow deserving of their lot. Does one suffering, victimized, or oppressed bear any culpability?</p> <p>e) Fails to adequately account for the ripple effect of sin: If Jesus has paid the price, why do I continue to suffer the consequences? Why do my sins echo through space and time? Why am I effected by the sins of others? (2 Samuel 11)</p> <p>5) What the Genesis 3 text says about mankind:⁴</p> <p>a) Created from dust like other animals, but different than animals having been made in God's image (<i>imago dei</i>).</p> <p>b) First couple could imagine being something greater than they were (Gen 3:6)</p> <p>i) Eve had a well-intentioned but misdirected motive to be better than she was created: to be <i>more</i> God-like.</p> <p>c) At the same time, they refused to live up to who they were. The Serpent did not promise them anything new, they were already like God (Gen 1:27, 3:4).</p> <p>i) The first couple bought into the half-truths and false promises of the Serpent.</p> <p>d) Adam and Eve realized their sin even before God "showed up" in the garden. God does not impose artificial consequences for sin, it comes with its own consequences (Gen 3:11b-19). "To violate the oral order is to injure, first of all, oneself and simultaneously one's environment and relationships. The sinner need not wait for the Day of Judgment; the quilt of sin begins to extract its price immediately."⁵</p> <p>e) Genesis 3 makes no mention of heaven or hell, salvation or damnation. Instead, it deals with "today" in the disarray in which the cosmos is thrown due to Adam's and Eve's desire to attain superiority over it. "The quest for superiority is an attempt to subjugate."⁶</p> <p>6) Enhanced theory of sin⁷</p> <p>a) Image and likeness (Gen 1:26), may refer to God's nature and maturing into God's likeness due to an outpouring of the Spirit (Irenaeus' view, 2nd c). St</p>
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⁴ Ibid. 9-15.

⁵ Ibid. 14.

⁶ Ibid. 15.

⁷ Ibid. 4-8.

	<p>Gregory the Theologian (c325-389) believed that God intended for mankind to acquire the knowledge forbidden in Gen 2 in due course.</p> <p>i) If true, then mankind was created needing “salvation” as he was imperfect and immature...Christ was in view from the beginning and not God’s response to sin!</p> <p>ii) Therefore, being Christ-like was humanity’s true and original goal!</p> <p>b) Mankind sought to “grow up” on his own apart from God; our development was arrested in Gen 3:6.</p> <p>i) Pride—Sin is mankind’s desire to be <i>more</i> than he is (be “like God” ahead of God’s timetable; Gen 3:5).</p> <p>ii) Sloth—Sin is mankind’s <i>failure to achieve</i> the fullness of his humanity, his appropriate God-likeness (we became afraid; Gen 8-10).</p> <p>iii) Both can be reconciled by understanding mankind’s failure as mistrust of God. Adam and Eve, and we, fail to trust that God has provided <i>enough</i>: neither too much nor too little; we fear that God has withheld the best (Gen 3:4-7). We continue to “murmur” just as the Hebrews did as they trekked from Egypt to the Promised Land, choosing to worry that God is providing and that the Promised Land will be all he says it is.</p> <p>7) Table exercise:</p> <p>a) Describe a time when you have over reached your humanity and wanted to be “like God.”</p> <p>b) Describe a time when you have failed to achieve the fullness of your humanity.</p> <p>c) Does this idea of mistrust, over reaching our humanity and our failure to achieve the fullness of our humanity help with your understanding of sin?</p> <p>8) Next week we will begin to unpack this...</p>
7:00	Closing Prayer

Further reading:

- *The Bible*
- Biddle, Mark E. *Missing the Mark*. Abingdon Press, 2005.
- McGrath, Alister. *The Twilight of Atheism*. 2004.
- McKnight, Scot. *A Community Called Atonement*. Abingdon Press, 2007.
- Plantinga, Cornelius. *Not The Way It’s Supposed To Be: A Breviary of Sin*. Eerdmans, 1995.
- Volf, Miroslav. *Free of Charge: Giving and Receiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace*. Zondervan, 2005.
- Wright, N.T. *Following Jesus: Biblical Reflections on Discipleship*. Eerdmans, 1994.