

LESSON ESSENTIALS

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

LESSON 5: SIN AND SALVATION

If people did not have problems, they would not turn to religion. We are all seeking solutions to our problems. The pursuit of a particular religion comes when a person identifies their greatest problem and then adheres to the religion that most sufficiently resolves that problem.

One thing that sets Christianity apart is what it identifies as man's greatest problem (sin) and how that problem can be resolved (salvation). Anyone who does not agree with this is not holding to true Christian doctrine.

Our inherent sin, and our ongoing sin of disobedience to God's laws, has separated us from relationship with our Creator...this is our greatest problem.

This doctrine is a good example of how all the essentials of Christianity need to be held and understood together. In order to believe that sin is your greatest problem, you also need to see that God is the Creator who set all things in to motion and who has a plan for His creation.

If you were to list your greatest problems and difficulties, what types of items would be on your list? Health concerns, relationships, safety and security, political unrest, financial woes – all of these are very legitimate problems and details that need solutions. But the greatest problem that any one of us has is much more universal than any of these. Christianity teaches that man's greatest problem is a broken relationship with God. Our relationship has been broken because of sin. The Bible teaches that no person is free from this condition. Because of the sin of the first man created (Adam), the entire human race is poisoned by a sin nature.

This is an enormous problem. Our inherent sin, and our ongoing sin of disobedience to God's laws, has separated us from relationship with our Creator. God the Father, the Righteous Judge over His earth, has every reason to be distant from us. He has every reason to judge us and to punish us eternally for our sin. Clearly, this is our greatest problem. Our health, our finances, or our relationships mean nothing in light of the eternal punishment that we deserve because we have broken, and are continually breaking, God's law.

Other religions may say our greatest need is to be free from self-thought, or to be free from the desires of the material world. Christianity says we need to be free from the sin that has enslaved us.

Other religions may say that the answer we need is to strive for personal perfection, to do enough good things to earn a good future, or to simply stop wanting anything good so that we are free from desires.

Christianity says that the only way to resolve our greatest need is to trust in Jesus Christ for our salvation. He is our salvation, freeing us from the slavery to sin and giving us the ability to live according to His good plan. We are saved, not based on the good deeds we may do, but on His perfect sacrifice. Jesus Christ broke for us the curse of sin over our lives so that we could be free of our greatest problem.

This doctrine is a good example of how all the essentials of Christianity need to be held and understood together. In order to believe that sin is your greatest problem, you also need to see that God is the Creator who set all things in to motion and who has a plan for His creation. You have to hold to the authority of the Bible that teaches us how to live and what God requires. In order to see the need for salvation you need to see that you are a sinner which requires seeing the Law and seeing the impossibility of holding to it in your own strength.

And yet, even if a person is hesitant to adhere to all of those truths at once, if they trace back through their list of problems and concerns following them back to their root and cause, they should come to see that there is a more fundamental flaw in the human experience than just the surface issues of health, finances, political instability, and so on. Why are we sick? Why are governments power-hungry and corrupt? Why are relationships so easily broken? There is a fundamental cause of all of these: the original sin brought on by the first man, Adam.

Christianity stands apart as the one religion that deals with the true root of the greatest human problem. The doctrine of sin answers our deepest questions. The doctrine of salvation resolves our problems most perfectly. Christianity does not offer salvation from surface difficulties; it offers salvation from the enslavement of sin which taints and poisons everything. Praise God for providing the solution to our greatest need through His Son, Jesus Christ.

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IN REVIEW

- The pursuit of religion is often undertaken as a way to find a solution to life's problems. Christianity provides the solution to man's greatest problem.
- The concept of indwelling sin and its effects on man's relationship with God is an essential doctrine of the Christian faith. Recognizing sin as man's greatest problem is essential for true Christian faith.
- Recognizing man's greatest problem drives us to the doctrine of salvation which says that we do not need to be saved from surface issues but rather from the enslavement of sin. True Christian faith requires that we see Jesus Christ as our only source of true salvation.

HAVE YOUR SAY

- Make your own list of problems. What would you say your greatest needs and concerns are? Can you see how at the root cause of all of them is sin? Pray and thank the Lord for the revelation of your greatest problem and for providing the solution to your greatest need through Jesus Christ.

- Believing the doctrine of sin requires us to think of ourselves as sinful people, and recognize that we have erred against God. Is it difficult for you to see yourself this way, or to take responsibility for your sins? Pray and ask God to show you your sinfulness, and make your heart to hate sin. Read 1 John 1:8-10 and write it down in your own words here.

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