

It Is Written

*A weekly publication of the
Junction Highway church of Christ in Kerrville, TX.*

Vol. 1

October 20, 2019

No. 42

Your Wreckage Can Be Repaired!

By Gary Henry

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of who I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life” (1 Timothy 1:15,16).

Under the influence of the gospel, Saul became a radically different man. The change was not superficial or temporary; it was deep and lasting. And later, writing now as Paul the apostle, he could offer himself as an example to prove just how sinful a person can be and still be saved by the gospel: “I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life.” If the prosecutor’s charge is that a truly wicked person can never change, Paul is “Exhibit A” to the contrary. He is a courage-giving example to anyone who has ever worried that they might be a hopeless case or a lost cause.

Most people, if they’re honest, know what it’s like to struggle with deeply ingrained character flaws. As we struggle to remove these flaws, we become frustrated. In time, we may come to doubt that real change is even possible. Sometimes we start thinking that way because we’ve been influenced by a determinism which says that at birth we are already “determined” — i.e., whatever we are, that’s what we’ll always be. At other times, we may be plagued with a victim mentality. We see ourselves as the victims of circumstances and influences that are more than we can handle.

My suspicion, however, is that most of the time our problem is just plain discouragement. The devil fights against us with a war of attrition; he keeps coming back, coming back, and coming back, trying to wear us down. After a while, our cause looks like it’s lost.

But the great hope of the gospel is that, while life lasts, none of us is a lost cause. Our defeats need not be final. Our failures need not be fatal. Real change for the better is always possible.

Whoever you are, my friend, believe this: your wreckage can be repaired. If God can turn a fire-breathing, murderous Pharisee into the great apostle of grace, he can surely help you get pointed in the right direction. Your fate is not fixed, and you’re not just a victim. You are a living person capable of great growth.

JUST ONE SIN

By Bob Craig

It’s been said that just one sin will not condemn a person. But let’s look at the record.

First, there is Adam and Eve. As far as we know, they committed only one sin each. God had told them, and they understood what he said, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17). They ate; they sinned; now they stood condemned and must suffer the consequences.

Moses was about as good a man as we can find. He was described thusly: “(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.)” (Numbers 12:3). But Moses committed one sin for which he must suffer the consequences. So we view the aged Moses standing on Mount Pisgah, overlooking the land to which he had led the Israelites, knowing that he could not enter in because of one sin. “And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither” (Deuteronomy 34:4). (Deuteronomy 32:51-52) “Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel at the waters of Meribah-Kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel. Yet thou shalt see the land before thee; but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give

the children of Israel."

There are more instances but that's enough of the Old Testament; let's look at the New Testament. From Acts 8:20-23 we take the case of Simon who was called the Sorcerer. "But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

One unforgiven sin can cause us to suffer the consequences, but we can be forgiven if we will hear what the King has to say.

Sinful Pride

By R. J. Evans

"Pride is spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment, or even common sense." — C. S. Lewis

Pride is a sin that is condemned many times in the Bible, yet it is so deceptive and insidious that it threatens all of us in various ways. It is such a dangerous sin, because it is so easily seen and loathed in others, but rarely recognized in one's own life.

The sin of pride has kept multitudes of individuals from obeying God and faithfully doing His will. The first thing required of any person who would please God is to humble himself. And pride keeps so many from ever doing what God has commanded in such passages as James 4:10: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, And He will lift you up."

God's attitude toward pride is expressed in such passages as Proverbs 16:5: "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord." One of the seven abominations that God hates is "A proud look" (Prov. 6:17).

Even when we have done some good deed, we must be careful not to allow pride to step in and cause us to "blow our own horn" — "do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing" (Matt. 6:3). The Bible says, "Let another man praise you, and not your own mouth; A stranger, and not your own lips" (Prov. 27:2). In other words, if there is a reason we should be praised, let it be done by our friends, brethren or companions with modesty. We may have done something worthwhile, but let us not forget that the value of the deed may be grossly inflated in our own minds. But, in the minds of our listeners, the deed, no matter how good, may not be accepted for the value we perceive it to have. So when we do our good works and good deeds, don't exaggerate, overstate or magnify them—they may become the biggest enemy we have—don't nourish them by boasting! If they are truly worthwhile, the world will know about it. Then we can graciously receive commendation, and retain the utmost respect in doing so.

Someone has said that pride is "the welcome mat to every spiritual prison cell." Pride can be such a stronghold—it cheats wherever it plays. Let us all be mindful that "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall" and "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (Prov. 16:18; 1 Cor. 10:12).