

## “Against You, You Only, Have I Sinned”

Over the past century, a misunderstanding of sin has prevailed, changing the very nature of the gospel itself. And while I think the mindset comes from a noble desire, we must make sure we don't allow it to pervert the true gospel, the purpose of Jesus' sacrifice, and the mission of His kingdom.

Sadly, as those who claim to be Christian have been influenced by humanist, socialist, and Marxist philosophies they have looked around and seen the travesties of oppression, inequality, and interpersonal harm. They see that society is messed up. We do need to recognize this. The problem, however, comes in the emphasis. As they have experienced the hurt of others sins and seen the awful conditions of those sinned against, they have begun to believe that the real travesty of sin is that we sin against each other.

It is a travesty to sin against each other. We shouldn't do that. Those who are saved by the grace and gospel of Jesus Christ will turn from that behavior and treat others with love. However, we must maintain the proper emphasis and focus. As David pointed out in **Psalm 51:4**, the real travesty of his sin was not that he violated Bathsheba; the real tragedy was not that he murdered Uriah (even if by a cat's paw); the real trainwreck was not that his actions caused the death of his child. The real catastrophe was that he sinned against God. “Against you, you only, have I sinned” (ESV).

Do you remember the biblical definition of sin? “Sin is lawlessness” (**I John 3:4**, ESV). What makes sin? You haven't committed sin because you have hurt someone, hindered someone, harassed someone. You have sinned because you violated God's law. Don't misunderstand, sin often hurts, hinders, and harasses others, but that is not what makes it sin.

What is so bad about breaking God's law? **Romans 3:23** brings this home when it says, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (ESV). Paul doesn't say, “For all have sinned and harmed their neighbor.” He doesn't say, “For all have sinned and oppressed their fellow citizens.” He doesn't even say, “For all have sinned and betrayed their brethren.” He says we've all sinned and fallen short of God's glory. That is the travesty. We are the handiwork of God. We should be shining forth his glory. Instead, we have diminished and hindered it by our sins. This is such a travesty that any harm we cause to others pales in comparison to what we have done to God.

Now don't misunderstand. The point is not that violating someone, murdering someone, causing someone else's death is not important in comparison to what we have done to God. The point is that since we recognize how bad it is to do these things, if David is going to say this, what we have done to God must be really, really awful.

Jesus doesn't seek to save society. He seeks to save sinners. Jesus didn't come to earth in order to show us how to treat people. He came to earth to save us from our sins. Again, don't misunderstand. Those saved by Jesus will learn from Him how to treat people. But Jesus didn't come to correct societal wrongs, fix societal institutions, or save societal schemes. He came to save sinners from their own sins. He came that God might be glorified in us.

Understanding this, we must recognize that performing societal welfare, while a good work, is not proclaiming the gospel. Certainly, those saved by Jesus Christ go about doing good (**Galatians 6:10**). However, the gospel is that the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ saves sinners from themselves. When we save individuals from the evil of others, we haven't spread the gospel. We've only spread the gospel when we've spread the message that folks can be saved from their own sins.

Are you spreading that gospel?

—Edwin L. Crozier