Stop Harboring Sin

Galatians 5:1 / Genesis 3:18 / Joshua 7 / Psalms 32

9/12/21

In the movies and comics, Superman is seen as indestructible. A hero that was “Faster than a speeding bullet! More powerful than a locomotive! Able to leap tall buildings at a single bound!"

And though nothing seemed to stop him there was one thing...Kryptonite.

Though we may not be as fast as a bullet, more powerful than a train, or able to leap tall buildings, we have power over sin in and through Christ.

* Phil. 4:13 tells us “*For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.”*

Now I don’t recommend going out after service and trying these things, but we have power over sin, and we’ve been freed from sin!

* Galatians 5:1 tells us *“So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don’t get tied up again in slavery to the law.*

Sin has always been very dangerous, much more than kryptonite, as it is “direct rebellion to God”. It’s no secret that we are in a day where “doing the wrong thing is right and doing the right thing is wrong”. The church has even unfortunately “softened” it stance against sin; allowing things to creep into the church that should never be allowed! We need to be even more aware in this day of sins presence in our hearts and in our lives. We need to become sensitive to its ways and resist it when we come face to face with it!

The unfortunate thing is that sin has become so familiar in some, that they don’t even see it as sin, and if they do, they justify it by using God’s grace in the wrong way. They say things like, “It’s ok to do this because I can just ask God for forgiveness. God always forgives.”

* Though this is true, this is an abuse of Gods mercy, grace, and forgiveness and is not scriptural. As matter-of-fact Paul tells us in Romans 6:1-2 “*Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? 2 Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?*

Ok, so we know we freed from sin & are not to live in sin, but about those things hidden or “harbored” in our hearts and lives?

* Things like: Pride, Gossip, Lying, Covetousness, Anger, Lust, Complaining, Fear

Did you know most dieters underestimate their weight? The opposite happens with people who suffer from anorexia. They tend to see themselves as heavier than they are. Sometimes the same thing happens when it comes to how we view our own sin.

* Sometimes we underestimate our sinfulness. We downplay or excuse our sinful actions, concluding that they are not really as bad as they actually are.
* Or we overestimate our righteousness, incorrectly concluding that the good things we have done far offset the bad.

Truth is we all have a past; we all have skeletons in the closet, we all have sins we partook in. The question we want to ask today is “Is it possible today, that there are sins in your heart that you’ve been harboring, hiding, or living comfortable and familiar with?

James 4:7-8 says to “*Humble yourselves before God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts...”* For some here today you need deliverance from these “hidden” sins you’ve been harboring and holding onto so God & you can draw closer together!

Today my prayer is that we would take a real look at our hearts in order to expose any “harbored” or “familiar” sins that is hindering us from drawing closer to God.

Now to be clear, there is no such thing as “hidden sin” ...at least from God. Now you may be able to hide it from family, friends, your church family, Pastor, etc. but mark God’s Word, it’s never hidden from Him.

* *Rev. 3:15a - “I know all the things you do,”*
* *Prov. 15:3 – “The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.”*
* *Jer. 16:17 – “For my eyes are on all their ways. They are not hidden from me, nor is their iniquity concealed from my eyes.”*
* *Psalms 44:21 - Would not God discover this? For he knows the secrets of the heart.*

In Genesis we see the 1st time sin was unsuccessfully hidden when Adam & Eve didn’t show up for their evening walk with God due to a “hidden sin”

* Genesis 3:8 *“When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the Lord God walking about in the garden. So, they hid from the Lord God among the trees.”*
* After trying to hide their sin, they were kicked out and banished from the Garden of Eden and the relationship between them and God was severed.

In Joshua 7 we see that Achan took some of the “dedicated” things from Jericho. Now this was more than keeping the spoils of war, this was sin...complete disobedience to God’s command and Word. The Lord had specifically told the Israelites that were to destroy EVERYTHING in Jericho, taking nothing except for what the Lord told them to.

* *Joshua 6:18 - “Do not take any of the things set apart for destruction, or you yourselves will be completely destroyed, and you will bring trouble on the camp of Israel.”*

But Achan had hid the spoils he took in his tent and this “hidden sin” brought the anger of the Lord upon the Israelites. Because of his “hidden sin” when the army of Israel went out to fight against AI, 36 of the men were killed and they retreated in fear.

* Now this army had just defeated Jericho and had just seen God move. Joshua was beside himself as to why this happened. Joshua cried out to God.

God was straight up with Joshua... Israel has sinned and broken my covenant! Get up and remove the sin! So, Joshua and the leaders found that Achan had taken spoils from Jericho and Achan, his family, and entire household was burned to death.

* Tell me God doesn’t deal with sin seriously. Sin, whether hidden or shown outwardly doesn’t just hurt you, but can harm your family, friends, and anyone else around you.

Let’s look at David, who also tried to hide his sin. Psalm 32. We don’t know the time or the situation in David’s life when he wrote this psalm. But it was likely written not long after David acknowledged his wrongdoing before God.

David starts off his psalm by declaring that a person whose sin has been forgiven is blessed.

* To be blessed means to have God’s favor. What is the condition for this blessing? God’s forgiveness

David continues, “*When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. 4 Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat.”*

* In other words, David had sinned, but was not acknowledging it.
* Harbored sin will wear you down and destroy you both physically & spiritually. The heaviness of guilt will begin to wear you out.

God out of love for David does not let David’s conscience get out of it. God’s finger was pushing and poking over the issue, just like He does with us.

* + Many who harbor sin, become calloused and agree to accept it. This is very dangerous. They ignore the Holy Spirits “knocking” and run the risk of being eternally separated from God!

But David’s heart was not hardened, and he describes his next action. *5. “Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, “I will confess my rebellion to the Lord.” And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone.”*

* David acknowledged his wrongdoing. He asked for forgiveness. He is free! Look how relieved he is in his writing...ALL MY GUILT IS GONE!

But David doesn’t end there. He calls God’s people to pray to God. 6*.“Therefore, let all the godly pray to you while there is still time, that they may not drown in the floodwaters of judgment.*

* He wants everyone to know, don’t do what I did and wait...Confess your sins now so you aren’t caught dying with them and facing judgement!

David’s confession is not just some sort of emotional pick up. He is not rejoicing over the fact that he feels better just because he got something off his chest. But he is rejoicing over the fact that his relationship with God has been restored and he is freed from the sin that he had been hiding! He isn’t living with guilt and shame anymore! The sin he had harbored and hidden was now gone! The familiarity of the sin he had been partaking in had been removed, and he was delivered, forgiven, and free!

This is not a small point. We don’t confess to God just so we can have an emotional release, but we confess to God because we know we are sinners and need to be restored to God, who is our salvation & “Hiding Place”. Like David if we continue in our “hidden” sin, we forsake the true source of salvation and hope in our life.

* David continues in vs. 7, “You are a hiding place for me; you preserve me from trouble; you surround me with shouts of deliverance.”

When we indulge and harbor sin, we are resisting God’s work in our lives. God instead needs to use a heavier means to move us where he desires. Sometimes in the form of judgement or discipline, but it’s always done in love. The hope is to restore us into a right relationship with Him; to “STOP HARBORING SIN” which is keeping Him from drawing near to you and you to Him.

Closing:

Sin is real, more real than Kryptonite. Sin blocks the flow of grace in our lives and God desires to restore that flow. This morning you be indulging in sin and even harboring it. And because of your pride or the desire to save face, or not wanting to deal it and remove the familiar way, you’re going to try & resist Him. That’s what the devils telling you right now...

* *Proverbs 28:13 “If you hide your sins, you will not succeed. If you confess and reject them, you will receive mercy.”*

Let us remember this morning that there is no such thing as hidden sin. Trying to hide sin from God is like running from your shadow; you can never get away.

* You can’t run away from God because he knows everything.
* Again, your family and friends might not know about your harbored sin, but God knows.
* All the skeletons in your closet should be confessed because unconfessed sin can and will block you from God.
* The other dangerous thing about trying to hide your sins is that you might think you’re getting away with it and that leads to deliberately sinning and backsliding, which is deadly.

We must be willing to repent. Repentance comes from a heart willing to submit to the kindness of a wrathful God who will revive, raise up and fill our hearts with divine grace. It is the full intention of the Father for His children to live in His sight. God has no greater desire than to enjoy the presence of His of you & I. Sin brings heartache, misery, and darkness but the grace of God brings joy and relief! Coming to the Lord revives. Refusing to repent destroys.

God is here this morning to cleanse the broken spirits of grief, sorrow, and brokenness. No greater joy can we enjoy in life than when we empty ourself of ALL sin and embrace the love of the merciful Father.

This week I heard a great phrase, “In order to see God’s face, we must be willing to lose face.” That is why the psalmist ends his psalm, *“Many sorrows come to the wicked, but unfailing love surrounds those who trust the Lord. 11 So rejoice in the Lord and be glad, all you who obey him! Shout for joy, all you whose hearts are pure!!”*

This morning, I would ask with all sincerity, can you shout for joy this morning, because your heart is pure? If not, my prayer this morning is that we would come to God and expose the “harbored & hidden” sins in our hearts. To experience the flow of God’s grace as we confess them and look to Christ for forgiveness, grace, and freedom in the Him like we’ve never experienced before.

Aren’t you tired of living with the guilt and heaviness of carrying around “harbored” sin? Let it out today & lay down that burden this morning, confess your sins to God and walk out of here free harboring nothing but Gods grace & forgiveness.