



High Cost of Sin

Who can calculate the cost of sin on this planet, or weigh the sorrow or the suffering piled high upon the scales of moral justice? How many jails or how many coffin nails are added to the awful bill and invoice for every sinful choice? How many dreams and hopes will sin this one day kill? What is the cost to sinners who do what they will, the lost or prodigals who spent their all or stopped their ears to a mother's cry or father's call? How great the disappointment, despair, darkness, wounds and scars or cold steel prison bars, for those insane with sin? Satan sells his evil wares and shouts in the marketplace and fairs, "Sin for Sale, Sin is now on Sale." Yes, on Sale, but in a truth, there is no doubt, the bill is in the mail.

Woe

What if every sin, like a needle or a pin had a fang or poisoned stinger owned each sinner as its kin?

What if all iniquity or every sinful deed like a chicken coming home to roost or made knife wounds that would bleed?

What if each transgression would not rest until it found a place to nest like vipers in every soul hell bound?

What if what you planted would sprout within your grave and no pardon could be granted and there was no Christ to save?



Spiritual Service

Paul implored the Roman believers in his famous twelfth chapter "*I beseech ye therefore brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice wholly acceptable to God which is your reasonable service.*" Our body is a temple. Our heart is an altar and our mind is a magnet. We were fearfully and wonderfully made.

Our body is a temple. "*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Holy Spirit liveth in you?*" (1Cor. 3:16; 1Cor. 6:19). In another place, referring to his body, Jesus said "*destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it again.*" God dwells not in temples made with hands (Acts 7:38). The body is where the real you lives and where God was meant to reign.

Our heart is an altar. Spiritually speaking, your heart is not a muscle that pumps blood. Your heart is what you want, what you desire, what you love. It is an altar. It is not only occupied by what you want (or as one said "what you really, really want") it also is a place of sacrifice showing what we are willing to give in order to get it. After a piano concert a patron met with the master musician and said "I would give anything to be able to play the piano like that," to which the pianist responded, "I did not give anything, I gave everything." We often forget that great sacrifice precedes the great performance or victory. A boxer who lost a prize fight was said to have at some point before losing the fight, losing heart. The heart is where sacrifices are made. The Bible says Daniel "*purposed in his heart, that he would not defile himself.*" God said in Jeremiah "*Ye shall seek me find me, when ye search for me with all your heart.*" Paul wrote, "*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*" In another place, Paul wrote, "*That Christ may dwell in your heart by faith*" (Eph 3:17). By the way, the Cross was the greatest altar the world has ever known. A heart is also the place of worship, surrender, as well as sacrifice. Samuel explained, "*Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart.*" (1Sam. 16:7). "*Out of the heart are the issues of life*" (Prov. 4:23). The first thing Noah did after the flood was to build an altar. Abraham's greatest hour was at an altar. Elijah reached his highest point on the summit of Mt. Carmel where he raised an altar upon which God's fire fell. Our heart is the real altar. It was what Jesus was talking about to the woman at the well, "*The day is coming when men will not worship on this mountain, or in Jerusalem, but they that worship will worship in spirit and in truth, for God seeketh such to worship him.*" This altar of the heart was polluted by sin and must be cleansed, regenerated and restored. Jeremiah wrote in Jer. 17:9 "*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it? Well, God can and does know it. The next verse goes on to say "I, the LORD, search the heart and try the conscience, even to give unto every man according to his ways and according to his doings."* The heart. That is why the Psalmist wrote, "*Search me Oh God and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts. See if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.*" Our Body is a temple. Our heart is an altar.

Our mind is a magnet. It attracts what it thinks about or is occupied with. Proverbs says, "*As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.*" No one actually does before he thinks, be-

Keep the Faith

fore he entertains or desires. We are attracted to what we think about and what we think about is attracted to us. Even Job said, “the thing I feared has come upon me.” God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love and a sound mind. Paul wrote from prison, “whatsoever things are true whatsoever thing are honest, just, etc., think on these things.” There is a spiritual aspect about our thoughts as powerful as the force of gravity in the universe to draw good or evil. It is amazing how a troubled mind (or spirit) on one side of a college campus will somehow meet with someone with the same spirit who lives on the other side of the campus.

Paul described the metamorphosis and the spiritual and moral transformation of the new natured life. *I beseech ye therefore brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, wholly acceptable unto God which is your reasonable (or spiritual) service (or worship). And be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.*

Our body is a temple. Our heart is an altar. Our mind is a magnet. Therefore we are to, with our mind **Think of Him**, with our heart, **Worship Him**, and with our bodies, **Serve Him**. ☪

Daniel and his friends afford an example of faith at its finest. During one of the darkest hours in the history of faith, four young men show us faith, not only “on fire,” but faith “in fire.” Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Faith is not wishful or positive thinking. Unlike the “when you wish upon a star” variety, our faith is not faith in faith, but faith in God and faith in God’s word. Faith involves an alliance, compliance, reliance, and a defiance. (Daniel 3:17-18)

Alliance- The Christian faith is first of all an alliance with God. We see nations forming alliances, (trade alliances, military alliances, political alliances). It’s about finding strength in partnership. Faith is an alliance and partnership with God. Immanuel means “God with us.” The problem with Israel through-out its history was her lack of faith, and her continual forming alliances with unbelieving nations. They were surrounded by hostile enemies so they from time to time formed alliances with Egypt, or with Syria or the surrounding states. God warned, “*what fellowship hath light with darkness.*” Rom. 8:31 “*If God be for us who can be against us.*” (Ps. 108:11; 60:10)

Compliance- The second element of believing something, or faith, is compliance. Faith is agreeing with God. Agreeing is accepting, following, adhering to. Why do you call me Lord, said Jesus, and do not do what I ask you? The Lord Jesus used illustration after illustration

to explain what in fact is true faith. A father asked his sons to go into the fields to work. One said, “I will go” but did not. The other initially said “I will not” but changed his mind (or heart) and went. “Which one,” said Jesus, “did the will of his father.” Faith embraces God’s will over our own. Daniel’s friends described this aspect of faith by saying “whom we serve” (Dan. 3:17). Paul said the same thing in Acts 27:23 “whose I am” (that’s alliance) and “whom I serve” (that’s compliance).

Reliance- Faith is a confidence, not in self, but in God. Faith believes that God is “able to deliver us.” Faith rests and relies on the Almighty. “For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure. (Phil. 2:13). Paul said, “being confident in this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will bring it to completion in the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:6). 2Thes 5:24 says “faithful is who calleth, who will also do it.” Jesus is called the “Author and Finisher of our faith” (Heb 12:2). Faith rests in confidence, that “with God all things are possible” (Mat. 19:26). Paul said “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13). Faith relies on God. It’s a reliance.

Defiance- Faith in God goes against the flow in a faithless world. Faith is a way and faith is a walk. Real faith has feet. It also has backbone. Jesus made it clear, we cannot serve two masters (Mat. 6:24). The Bible says that Noah “being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (Heb. 11:7). Faith is a rejection of error and evil and all that is against good and against God. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said, Do what you will with us, but “we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” In other words, “we will not bow down.” ☪

