

Record of Sermons delivered during the month of June 2016

(added progressively after each Sunday)

Delivered Sunday 5 June 2016

*Back to Basics:
Man*

We continue with the Series: Back to Basics of Christianity.

Previously, for about 5 weeks, we described the Bible. The Bible is basically about God, so then we took over a month talking about God.

But the Bible is also a set of books about Man (mankind).

So for the next two weeks our topic is 'MAN'.

A very important subject, indeed.

Now there's confusion whenever there is a National election. At such times we are wearied by TV adverts and so on telling us that 'they' have the answer to our problems. [We recall that in 2014 at Mount Magnet the multiple welfare agencies both from within and from outside the town, each justify their existence (and the spending of tax-payers' money) on their particular, competing 'hobby horses'. And their efforts might just as well be mere personal hobbies, since things continue to get worse and worse. Children and their lack of parent-controlled circumstances in this town are noticeably worse than we saw them 5 years earlier.]

The sad thing is that if you put politicians (or welfare workers) down on a bench and ask them the most basic question of all, few if any can answer. They claim to have programmes to address their particular 'problem' of interest. A problem that ails 'Man'. But the basic question is ignored. What is 'man'?

Most people are embarrassed by this question. They might say, "Well man is man. Humans are humans." Is that an answer?

Only if we know what man is, can we work out what his needs are.

Then it turns out we can easily address those needs.

If we don't know what man is, we can never know what his needs are.

It won't do, for example, for a candidate in an election, to say, "Vote for me!" If he can't answer that most basic question: What is man?

When pressed some might say, “Well man is a superior animal.” What makes him superior? In what ways is he superior? How come this particular animal is superior compared with the others? How can he even call himself anything, when other creatures don't have such 'self awareness'?

Over and over those who attempt an answer, stumble. Maybe you've never asked yourself such a question. Thus you've never answered it.

But the Bible asks the question on several occasions and right from the beginning answers it!

We start by remembering, that in the Bible, we find man described in 5 different conditions:

1. Firstly, we find mention of man on the earth just as he was created. He was in fellowship and communion with God. There was no imperfection in his life. Absolutely nothing was wrong with him spiritually, morally or physically. Now you can't find a man like that in the world today.
2. Then we find man on the earth 'fallen'. He's walked out on God. He dies. He can be ill. Because he's a sinner! He's rebellious against God. He's lost the fellowship with God. He is guilty before God. You can find men like that all over the world. That is you as you were born!
3. Then you can find man in the Bible, still on the earth, **redeemed**. God has searched for him and found him. His sins have been forgiven – because they've been put to Jesus Christ's account; God accepts him – because Jesus Christ's life has been put to his account; God Himself lives in that person's life – and changes him by His Holy Spirit, through the Bible. He knows God (not perfectly, but really) and he gets to know Him even better. Here then is someone who has been 'redeemed'. He's been bought back! There are many in Churches who are redeemed – sadly not necessarily, all.

So far, then, there's.

Man as he was created: you can't find him anywhere.

Man who has 'fallen': that's all of us when we are born.

And **redeemed** man: that's perhaps most of those in true Churches, but a very small minority in the world at large.

However that's not the end of the story!

4. The 4th way we find man, according to God's Word, the Bible, is man in eternity, damned!
Because those who are 'fallen', and just stay as they are (they don't have to do anything) they are guilty before God; they're displeasing to God; they are out of fellowship with God; they are living without God; and they die without God. In eternity they are damned. We find that state of man clearly spelt out in the Bible. That may be the future which awaits you. It certainly is if your an

unconverted man or woman and you refuse to come to Christ. [Equally concerning such a future may apply to some of your family and close friends!]

5. And fortunately we find man in a 5th state. We find man in eternity – glorified. These are the people who are saved on earth; ransomed by God and healed – restored and forgiven. When they die, of course being in fellowship with God, their fellowship is made perfect. They come to His judgement seat, but are completely acquitted, because of what Jesus Christ has done for them. They are welcomed into God's everlasting holy home and they are perfectly happy, because they are able to enjoy God throughout eternity.

So when we talk about man we're talking about 5 different states. That's what should be remembered throughout this somewhat basic consideration of 'man'.

That said, there are 6 key facts which are now in front of us.

1. We are here! (We all recognised that.) We are here ... because God created the world and he created man to inhabit it. Now politicians and anyone else who speaks about man, if they forget that man is a creature, who's been made out of nothing by the Word of God, then they don't really know what man is. Consequently they cannot hope to prescribe any real solution to man's problems. We are creatures. The universe hasn't always been here. It then 'came into being'. God, who never 'came into being', always was, from eternity to eternity, is God.

God spoke: and the heavens and the earth were made.

From that material –

God spoke: and there was light.

God spoke: and there was the firmament.

God spoke: and the sea and dry land were separated.

God spoke: and plants began to grow.

Now light (energy) had been flowing out of God alone until that moment and now –

God spoke: and there were light-givers, the Sun and the Moon and He made the stars.

God spoke: and there were creatures in the water and in the sky.

God spoke: and then there were land creatures. (organic life)

And then God came and made man, and all that preceded was in preparation for this the highest and best of creatures which God made when He came to the end of His creative activity. God has not made anything since man. God is still active, but God is not creating. The last creature God created was Eve, which He made from Adam.

You can't understand man if you forget that he is a creature made by God.

2. Man was created to possess the earth. He was made on the earth. He was made from the earth and he was made to possess the earth. And God spoke to man and said, “Be fruitful and multiply and become numerous. You're to scatter all over the planet and everything you find in the planet, whatever it is, you're to use it and exploit it and make it your servant.” This is what was said to “unfallen” man. God went on to say, “Have dominion over the fish of the sea; over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” God is the King,

but man is king under God. The king over creation. It was never God's intention that the creation should be able to manage without man. Even before the earth was spoilt, Adam had to cultivate and tend the garden. It was never God's intention that 'nature' could just be able to run rampant and still be 'alright'. It needed the man to cultivate it and order it and organise it and use it and subdue it and make it his servant. So that he could enjoy it. It's worth reading Psalm 104: it tells you how man cultivates the grass and the field and the herbs and the cereals. And he enjoys it! It tells you how man exploits the vine and makes wine and enjoys it. It shows you how man makes bread and eats and enjoys it. And the whole creation is given to him, by a good God, for him to **enjoy**.

Fruitful seasons, and all things, richly to enjoy. That's why God made man! He's the highest creature of all. **The creation was made to be under him. If you forget that, you can never understand man.**

3. Man was created to know, serve and ... (we're so pleased to be able to use this next word, yet again) **enjoy** God. When you talk to men and women today about enjoying God they find it a very strange word to use. And here's just one more proof of the truth of the Bible: When man was created he did enjoy God. Since he's 'fallen' and rebelled he finds that the word, enjoy, when used of God is a strange word to use.

Now man was made in God's image. We read in Genesis 1:27. 'God created man in His own image. In the image of God He created him. Male and female, He created them.'

Now what does that mean? When I stand in front of the mirror, I see myself. And yet it's not really me! It doesn't even look like me: when I part my hair it's on the left, but that fellow in there, his parting's on the right. So it's an image of me and yet it's not me. There are a number of differences.

God has a type of mirror image, in man. In certain things we are like God. In others completely different:

God is infinite – we are finite.

God is eternal – we are not intrinsically eternal. [God gives us an eternal future – in heaven or hell, but we were created at a certain time – not eternally existent, as God is.]

God is unchangeable – we certainly can't say that about man.

Yet:

God has being – and so do we.

God is wise – and we're the wisest of the earthly creatures.

God is powerful – we have authority over all the earthly creatures.

God is just – we have a sense of right and wrong.

God is holy – all men have some form of religious sense even after the 'fall'.

God is good – we know what goodness is even though we don't always practise it.

God is truth – all men hate it when you tell them a lie. Even 'fallen' men!

So God is completely different: infinite; eternal; and unchangeable.

Yet in certain respects we resemble God, in a way that no other creature does. The

imprint of God is on us. We were made to know Him; serve Him; and **enjoy** Him.

We were made to have fellowship with God:

It's evening time in Eden. God's presence is in the garden and He asks the most normal of questions. "Adam, where are you?" Because Adam was created to enjoy fellowship with God. That's why the first commandment of all is: 'You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.' We were made to love Him and we were made to **depend** on Him. That's why Jesus says, "Man ...", (He didn't say: Christians; Jews; or religious people) He says, "**Man, does not live by bread alone, but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God.**" We are made to live in dependence on God. And that of course means, obeying God. God said, "You can eat of all the trees in the garden, but there is a tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it nor even touch it, because in the day that you do you shall surely die." God laid down a rule of obedience. And so we can say, with the Bible, 'Fear God and keep His commandments. This is the whole duty of man.' Because man is not just a physical creature.

How was man made? Here is the dust of the earth, the ground, the chemicals from which the world was made. God shapes from these components, a man. Here is a perfect man. We see him. And yet he's not 'man' yet. Then, God breathes into him the 'breath of life' and he becomes a living soul. If you see a dead body, you know it's not the person you loved. All the shape is there, but the 'person' has gone.

We are physical and we have physical needs:

- we need to eat;
- we need to drink;
- we need to breathe;
- we need to exercise.

But if you just satisfy the physical needs of a man you haven't even begun to really satisfy his needs. Because there is an invisible side of him, which escapes all definition: sometimes the Bible calls it spirit; sometimes soul; sometimes breath. These are multiple words which have been used: and now, thousands of years later we can't really define it. We'll call it 'soul', because that's the most commonly used word in the Scripture.

You have a soul. You are a soul! You are a spiritual creature. Bodily, almost all your cells die and are replaced many times during your life. In that sense you're not the same physical person as you once were. But you are still that indefinable you. You have been created with an immortal soul! (Even those who are 'predestined' to eternal punishment.)

Any politician, any other public spokesman, any churchman, any philosopher, or any person at all, who thinks that you can just satisfy a man by keeping him clothed, providing opportunity for exercise, giving the physical requirements, (which includes mental health) doesn't 'know' man at all and **can't hope to know how to 'satisfy' the whole man. The immortal soul of man. ...**

(deferred NT Reading:

¹⁶ So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. ¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here! ¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:¹⁹ that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: be reconciled to God. ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.)

Delivered Sunday 12 June 2016

*Back to Basics:
Man Part 2*

(Review Part 1)

4. Man rebelled. (We're going to talk about this more in few week's time.) When man rebelled, against God he lost his way. "All we like sheep, have gone astray!" says the Bible, "We have turned everyone to his own way." Men and women follow their own track. They think that's the right one. "I'll do my own thing," they say. But they've lost their way! It's an amazing thing – the Bible's quite blunt about it, in Romans 1 and else where, as we read – that men and women actually find it easier to put value on things that they can see and touch, than upon God:

All over the world there are people, who bow down to sticks and stones. All over the country, while they don't actually have idols, people have ideas of God that are completely false, but which appeal to them. Because they've invented them themselves. They put their own shapes into their head, and even have objects – cars, houses and other things – which become really important, very important in their lives. To the point where these become the **most** important. Man's lost his way and yet there's still something inside him, that speaks to him about God.

Our reading reminds us that what could be known of God was manifest (or evident) in them, because it's been revealed to them. Then Paul talks about the fact that though they knew God, they didn't live in God's way. And God gave them up!

The Bible talks about men and women grasping after Him. It says, "God has put eternity in his heart." Where ever you meet man, he is found to be a religious creature.

Every religion has some sort of prayer; some form of service; some form of ministry; some form of offering; and some form of sacrifice. Because the original religion of man hasn't been completely forgotten. It's written inside the human conscience: it's very deformed; very spoiled; very perverted, but men can never shake off the idea of God.

Everyone here, probably know the word for a man who doesn't believe there is a God (atheist). Hardly anyone knows the word used in English for a man who does believe in God (theist). Because not to believe in God is so unusual, that we all learn that word. It's so normal to believe in God that nobody bothers to learn the word for someone who actually believes in God.

We have a sense of God and since we walked out on God, now our greatest **need** is to be reconciled. To be put right with Him. The glorious message of the gospel is that you may be reconciled to God through what Jesus Christ has done.

We're going to learn more and more about Jesus Christ in this series, so let's start by getting hold of that truth now: You may be reconciled to God! You may be brought back into fellowship with God. You may come to know God through what Jesus Christ has done. By His life and death and rising again.

5. This 5th fact might seem a little strange at first. God is angry and yet patient with rebellious man. Another case where we find God to have ways that are completely foreign to us: when we're angry – we're not patient; when we're patient we're usually not angry. God is both angry and patient with rebellious man.

He's angry in the sense that our reading showed. Men and women, know in their conscience that God exists. But they don't want to go His way. So God is angry with them. How does God's anger show itself, according to our reading? God gives them up! God gives them over! What does this mean?

Someone says, "I don't like the light! I don't like the light! I don't like the light!" So God says, "Fine! I will turn it out."

We say, "I don't like the idea of God! I don't want to go the way of God."
"Fine! I will take out the idea of God from you, and I will take out the desire to look in My direction. I'll turn out the light!"

But once people are living in this spiritual darkness, they go in all sorts of directions. They can't see anything clearly. That's where fornication, sexual immorality, practising homosexuality, coyness, thieving, lying, murder, envy, disobedience to parents and inventions of evil things come from. God in effect says, "If you won't live in the light and you decide, deliberately that you don't want the light, then I shall turn it out and leave you to live in darkness." And humans then go into all these things which destroy their relationships with each other and ultimately destroy themselves.

So God is angry! And yet they still live, these men and women. A thunder bolt hasn't come down from heaven and struck them dead! Even in their darkness God's word through the Bible and preaching is still accessible. Within their grasp. God hasn't

struck then dead and He still speaks to them every day. The sun still shines on the wicked as well as the just. The rains still come down on the wicked as well as the just. Hearts continue to beat even in the unconverted. Lungs still work! God hasn't removed you. Yet!

Earth is the only place where you can still turn to God. It's too late afterwards. This planet is the only place where you can repent and believe the gospel. It's too late later. But God hasn't taken you away. Yet! And so while God is angry, yet, at the same time, He's so wonderfully patient. Because every day, is a day given by God for you to repent. Remember that you're a creature who's walked out on the creator. Seek Him again to find Him in Jesus Christ.

6. To those who are redeemed God tells us why we are here. "Lord", the Christian may say, "when I was converted, why didn't you take me straight to heaven?" The Bible gives the answer:

First of all, it was always God's intention that we should know Him here on earth. And we do! We are here to **know** God. 'This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.'

And the reason that you live, is not to be great. Not to make a name for yourself. Not to be known and not just to enjoy everything – although God gives such enjoyment. The reason that you live is to **know** Him.

And we're here to **please** God. "Whether we're absent or present", says Paul, "we make it our aim to be pleasing to Him." It was always God's intention that we should live to know Him and to please Him. His redeemed – a whole new race of men and women from all races – that know Him and live to please Him.

What the gospel does for us is that it turns us around to face God again and to live with God at the centre of our thinking, speaking and acting.

And we're here to do His **will**. We're here to be made more like Christ. Because Christ is away preparing a place for us, while His Spirit is at work preparing us for that place. So we're being changed from one degree of glory to another degree of glory, by God the Spirit. We're being changed into the likeness of Christ. (It seems such a slow affair, but it IS happening in the life of the believer.)

And we're here to **extend** the Kingdom. It was to Christians, that Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." It was to Christians! And Jesus said, before He left His disciples, "You're to teach those who are converted by this ministry every thing that I've told you to do."

He told them to teach the gospel to every man, woman, young person, and boy and girl. We're all in the business of spreading the Word.

And we're here supremely to **glorify** God. To live in such a way that we have great thoughts about Him. To live in such a way that Christian friends have great thoughts about Him. And to live in such a way that the world around us (even if it never gets converted) has great thoughts about Him.

So whether you live or die, that's your purpose in living. "You've been bought with a price," said the Apostle Paul, "Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit – which are the Lord's. "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do," says the Word of God, "do all for the glory of God." That is the aim of our living. That's why we were made in the first place.

So you see that MAN, remade by the gospel, is being prepared for heaven. We're greatly looking forward to heaven. Those who are Christians. 'Whom have I in heaven except You, and there is none on earth whom I desire except You.' says the Bible.

Peter said, "You love Him though you have never seen Him, and you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the goal of your faith, even the salvation of your soul."

[⁷ These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honour when Jesus Christ is revealed. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, ⁹ for you are receiving the end result of your faith, the salvation of your souls. 1 Peter 1:7-9]

We are well aware that we have never seen Him, but we are going to. He's in heaven and while we know Him on earth we are being prepared for Him in that place.

The day is coming when the trumpet will sound; when the archangel will shout and the Lord will descend. We then will see Christ. At that moment the final separation will come: those who lived side by side on earth as fallen and redeemed, they will be separated. Those who are going into eternity as damned or glorified, they will be separated. We will see the whole redeemed humanity being caught up to meet the Lord.

The graves will be opened and the dead in Christ will rise first. The Christians alive at the time will be changed in the twinkling of an eye and they will also meet the Lord: the mortal will put on immortality and the corruptible incorruptibility. So shall we be forever with the Lord.

Then we shall perfectly understand what and who MAN is!

[1827]

May this be so for all the saints gathered here today.

*Back to Basics:
SIN Part 1*

These days, it's usually only in Churches where the Bible is believed, that people still talk about SIN. But you can't understand the gospel, and you can't understand the message of the Bible, unless you know about sin. [How can you explain that we desperately need a 'Saviour', if we don't know and acknowledge what we need to be saved from.]

This is number 7 in a series on Back to Basics sermons by Dr Stuart Olyott. (typically we spend two weeks on each of his original sermons).

The first two were about the Bible: so we should now know why we believe it to be God's Word.

Three were about God: so we know with whom we have to do.

And for the last two weeks on 'man': so we know who we are.

Now we come to sin.

1. We start with 1John 3:4. "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness." Consider the ancient building implement, the plumb line. This was mentioned by the prophet Amos 7:7-8

⁷ This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb, with a plumb line in his hand. ⁸ And the Lord asked me, "What do you see, Amos?"

"A plumb line," I replied.

Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer. ..."

If you look at that wall, here in the Church: some may say that the wall is vertical, and others may say, "Well from where I'm standing, it's not quite vertical."

But nobody can know how true that wall is until you put the plumb line up (or is it down). Then we can know if it's vertical or not. It's no longer a matter of opinion. It's no longer a matter of how you see things, we have a definite standard, that tells whether it's vertical or not.

The God, of whom we've been speaking, has spoken to His world. The whole of the Bible is His Law: you can summarise the Law in the 10 Commandments, and you can summarise the 10 Commandments into two Commands: loving God with all your being and loving others as much and in the same way as you love yourself. Anything which does not come up to God's Law, or any thing that breaks through God's Law, is Sin!

Therefore sin is the same all over God's world, because the standard is the same all over creation. Certain things are wrong and they are wrong everywhere and they're wrong all the time. Certain things are right and they are right everywhere and they're right all the time. Your opinion and mine are irrelevant. God has spoken, and has said

that certain things are always wrong and certain things are always right. There is a plumb line. It is His Law, which is **a reflection of His own character**.

It's very important that we grasp the fact that it's God Law which decides what sin is. Some of us may consider, "That I'm not such a great sinner: I respect my parents; I don't commit adultery; I don't lie; I don't steal; I don't want what belongs to other people; I don't kill.

But you see, have you kept Sunday in the way God says? Or have you said, "Oh my God", when you weren't worshipping God? Or have you an idea of God, which is not the Biblical idea? Or do you have anything which is big in your life, so big that God gets crowded out, even sometimes?

If so, then you've broken even one of the links in a chain. The whole chain is broken [by just one weak link] and you're as bad a sinner as any adulterer, any thief, or any murderer, because the Bible itself says, "If anyone offends the Law in one point he is guilty of all." [To 'be good and to do good' – in ones own eyes and the world's – doesn't even begin to be enough. Only Christ is enough!]

It's the Law of God which defines what sin is. And therefore that puts an end to all that nonsense about: what's right for you, might be wrong for me; and what's right for me might be wrong for you. [The whole thrust of the modern-day almost universally-lived philosophy, called Post-modernism".]

God is a great reality, the everlasting reality, and He has spoken, clearly, about what is right and what is wrong.

2. Now we come to 'the first sin'.

Genesis chapter 1,2 and 3 are in a history book. Therefore they are history. We have in the narrative of Adam and Eve, not a quaint fairy story, we have history! Adam was a real man and Eve a real woman. The New Testament says so! And what the Bible says took place, took place.

God had made it clear to Adam and Eve what was right and what was wrong. They didn't need the Law written on the wall. They didn't need the Law written on stone. The Bible tells us that they had the Law written on their hearts. And they walked so intimately with God and they had such perfect fellowship and contact with God, that they knew exactly what was right and what was wrong.

There are two words (in bold type on the sheet) which are of the greatest importance. They were **FREE** to go up that path or **FREE** to go down the other path. No one was pushing them to one path or the other. They were **FREE**!

But this is very important: they were also **ABLE** to chose to go up that path as well as chose to go down the other. And that's where they were different from us. If they went up that way, which was God's way. If they followed the right and shunned the wrong, they knew they would live forever.

But if they went down the other way, they were told that the day they put their foot on that path they would be on the path of death.

So they were FREE and they were ABLE to go up one path or down the other. Unfortunately they listened to the devil. The devil's tactics haven't really changed very much at all. Sin is lawlessness, but the Devil said, "Ha, if you walk down that pathway you won't die. The only thing that's wrong in this world," says the Devil, "are the things that harm you. It won't do you any harm [just a little apple]. It won't do any harm!" And that is the Devil's definition of sin today. Every thing's alright, except what harms you, or what harms another. Every thing's alright. Which is in direct contradiction of what the living and only God has said to His world. He has said that what is in **agreement with His character**, and therefore His Law (because His Law is just a reflection of His character) is right, and what is a contradiction of His character (and therefore a contradiction of His Law) is wrong.

It's by looking to God you find out what's right and what's wrong. You don't look at the consequences. It's not asking the question, "Will this harm me? Will this do any harm? What's the harm?" You will never know what's right and wrong asking that question. It's only by asking, "What is God like? What is He like?" Then you will know what's right and what's wrong.

Well Adam and Eve's crime was a terrible crime: they rejected what God had said. They rejected that there was such a thing as absolutes. That some things are always right and some things are always wrong. They believed the Devil's lie: that you can know what's best for you. Do you believe that lie? Do you really know what's best for you? If you think you do, you've been duped!

It was a terrible crime, because they went against the command of the living God. It was a terrible crime because they were FREE and ABLE to go along either path. And it was a terrible crime because He had told them what the consequences would be. That was the 'first sin'. They took the forbidden fruit!

3. Now this is something none of us like to hear.

Ministers who preach, what follows, are regularly told by their listeners that they don't like what is being told to them.

If you were on a boat that was sinking and you were told that it was going to sink. And you complained that you didn't like what you were being told. It wouldn't stop the boat from sinking! The fact that you might kick against the truth doesn't turn it into an untruth. It remains true. Winston Churchill said, "Truth is like a boulder: you can spit on it; push it; kick it; or turn your back on it. But it's still there!"

This following truth will still remain no matter what you think of it. If you want to look it up again you'll find it at Roman's 5: 12-21.

Adam and Eve sinned: when Adam sinned we sinned in Him! We were there. Adam's disobedience is our disobedience. Adam's guilt is our guilt!

When a baby is born, he's not just born with a bias towards sin (like a lawn bowling ball will curve towards the biased, weighted, side). He's born a sinner. That's why he sins. He sins because he's a sinner. He's already a sinner. When a baby is born he's already guilty. **And that's the fact that people don't like!**

Is it possible that this child coming into the world is already guilty? Yes it is! Because

God chose to deal with the human race 'federally'. Federally means that there may be lots of separate things but they are dealt with as though they are all one. There are lots of separate individuals in the world but God deals with the human race federally. Adam was the head of the race and what Adam did is said to have happened to the race. Is Adam guilty? Then the race is guilty. Did Adam sin? Then the race has sinned. Everyone who has descended naturally from Adam is a sinner. That's why Jesus Christ had to be born of a virgin. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. So He was perfectly holy from the moment of His conception, surrounded by the Holy power of the Spirit. So He was never in any way polluted by sin. The chain from Adam was broken, so He could save us.

But we were not born that way. We each had a sinful father and mother and were born a sinner. [just as we were born with all the other inherited traits]
You and I were born guilty.

You might complain, "But that's not fair! We weren't there when Adam sinned. We weren't there when Eve did what she did. We weren't there!"

You were you know.

But if you don't like it, why do you repeat Adam's sin every day? If you don't think it's fair: that Adam's sin should be put to your account, why on earth do you repeat that sin. That's what the Bible has said to us. Our daily behaviour reveals that we **approve** of Adam's sin and so we're partakers of it in the fullest sense.

Every time someone doesn't walk in perfect fellowship with God, he's saying, "Adam you got it right. I'm going your way." And it's useless for such a person to complain about what Adam did, because they're doing it themselves.

You can't accomplish anything by objecting to this. You're guilty. So am I. You're sinful. So am I. Your miserable. So am I. Because we are sinners.

Remember this: (Rom 5:19)

For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

The disobedience of one ruined all the people joined to him. The obedience of One saved all the people who are joined to Him.

The 'first' Adam: we're all in him, so we're all sinners. The 'last' Adam: those of us who are in Him, were saved by the kindness of God. The very federal (representative) principle which ruined us, is also the very federal principle which saves us. So why complain about being ruined in Adam, because if you don't like that principle you can never be saved, because we are saved on exactly the same principle.

One man's guilt made us all guilty. Another man's obedience, means God treats us as though we are obedient.

One man's stupidity makes us all stupid. But that One man's sacrifice means that all those joined to Him had their sins paid for.

There's a perfect logic and wonderful balance in the teaching of the Bible. Sin has been dealt with by the One man, living perfectly, dying innocently, for sins that weren't

His own, and rising from the dead to save to the uttermost, all those who come to God by Him.

[2205]

May this be so for all the saints gathered here today.

(Two more points next week.)

Delivered Sunday 26 June 2016

***Back to Basics:
SIN Part 2***

We continue the series of Bible teaching which we call "Back to Basics".

It's very important that all of us should have a strong foundation in the basic understanding of the Bible and the Gospel in particular.

Let's consider what happens to people who receive bad teaching: Imagine a man in the desert. He thinks he sees an oasis of water. But when he gets closer to it he sees that it's just sand. A mirage!

A little later he sees some more water, but again as he looks more closely, it's another mirage. No substance!

Then one day (or during one hour) he sees some real water, but he now kicks sand into it, because he thinks it's another mirage. When this time it isn't.

A lot of teaching given in churches: it's just not true. People examine it closely and say, "It's nothing!" And then one day they come face to face with real Christianity, but because they've been seeing so much false illusion, they "kick sand" into the true gospel. It's very important that you should have contact with the real gospel and no 'other gospel'. Otherwise you might end up "kicking sand" into the real thing. So we're spending our sermons looking at the basics.

So far we have transcribed the two sermons of Dr Stuart Olyott about the Bible: so we know why we believe it to be the Word of God ... and we come to know that it is the Word of God as we use and 'experience' it.

There were 3 sermons about God: So we know the basic things about Him.

Then about man: You certainly can't answer man's problems if you don't know what man is. But the Bible tells us.

And most recently about sin: [How can you explain that we desperately need a 'Saviour', if we don't know and acknowledge what we need to be saved from.] We

learnt that sin is very wicked and we are very wicked. When Adam sinned we sinned in him: that when a baby is born, he's not only twisted he's guilty.

Two more points to cover (see sheet)

4. Just how sinful our 'fallen' state is!

Most people, especially young people, don't actually believe the world is as wicked as the Bible says it is. We're in a terrible state!

We're guilty of Adam's sin (as covered last week): every man and woman and young person is guilty before God.

Have you got any righteousness that will recommend you to God? Is there anything about you? Anything that actually means that God **must** accept you and approve you, welcome you and receive you? He's holy (uniquely set apart). And as we have read: "There is none righteous, not one. There is none who does good.

[Romans 3:10 – from Psalm 14:1-3; Psalm 53:1-3 or Ecclesiastes 7:20]

We really are in a terrible state. Our whole nature has been corrupted. We looked at the above verses but now we look at another. Gen 6:5 Not because all that the Bible teaches about sin is in this verse, but it's a very good summary of what man is, as a sinner. (KJV)

⁵ And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

On the sheet we have picked out 5 points:

Inward - it talks about the imagination (innermost) thoughts of my heart.

Great – the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great.

Continual - every intent (alternate translation for imagination) of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Universal – the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth,

Total – every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil, continually.

How foolish it is when people think that somehow of other they can do something which will impress God enough for God to save them! When we have such a verse as that. And dozens of others like it, which show us that we are totally corrupt.

Now the Bible puts it like this: a tree can't be separated from its fruit.

Here is an apple tree. What fruit grows on it? Apple.

Here is a pear tree. What fruit grows on it? Pear.

Here is a sin tree. Can you pick off anything but sin from a sin tree? Only sin. The nature of man is corrupt.

Here is a spring of water gushing from the ground, but it has passed through poisonous strata on the way. Therefore all the water that comes up is poisoned.

Every word we speak has sin in it. Every thought we think has sin polluting it.

Everything we do is effected by impurity. We are very sinful. And yet we're not as wicked as the Devil is.

(set up this actual demonstration)

Here are three glasses: this one has water in it; this one has ink; and this one has water but I take a drop of ink and add it. Very soon the water in this third glass is clouded and polluted.

The first represents man before the fall – no sin at all in him.

The second the Devil – he's as sinful as it is possible to be.

And the third is fallen man – sin has gone into every single part of his life. Every part is polluted. Nothing is pure any more!

Now we're not as sinful as it's possible to be. Why? Because the Bible tells us we have a conscience. This holds some of us back. Then there's the State: lots of people don't do certain things because they're afraid of getting caught. [this was one of the benefits of the 10 Commandments as part of the Law of the Jewish State]. Then there's the fear of death: everyone fears death, so some people say, "I wonder if there is anything afterwards." And it holds them back from doing certain things.

Then there's the family. "It wouldn't please my mum!". "If me(sic) dad heard about that!". There's education: we **used** to be trained in a certain way. And society: we don't like to be badly thought of. [Though what Society sees as bad and 'unnatural' seems to have been turned upside down, in recent times ... it's apparently very commendable to practise some things that have been described as sinful in the Bible.] Nonetheless there are a lot of things that hold us back, from being wholly like the Devil, but it doesn't alter the fact that we are still very sinful in God's eyes.

Here are those two paths that we mentioned last week that Adam and Eve had before them. The path that leads up to God versus the descent to death.

Am I FREE to go up the one or down the other? Of course. No one is pushing me along either path. So I am completely free to follow either: The one that leads to life or the other that leads to death. One that leads to God and one that leads to damnation.

I am FREE, but I'm not ABLE to walk any path except the downward one. Because my nature is so polluted that the downward path is the only way I will ever go, since this is the only way my fallen will, wants. [You might like to fly like a bird, but your unaided, physical nature means you are not able. No one stops you from trying. Your free to try!]

The Bible says, "Can anything bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Can you? "No," says the Bible, "no one." "Can a leopard lose its spots?" Of course he can't. It's part of his nature. Can a sinner whose nature it is to sin, suddenly stop sinning and become (unaided) something that he isn't. No He can't. The two paths are there. We are FREE to chose, but the only path that the sinner will ever chose is the downward one. That's how sinful and lost we are.

*The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.*

Who can understand it?

Says the Bible (Jeremiah 17:9).

5. So we come to our last point:

We've seen what sin is; we've looked at the 'first' sin. We talked about the fact that we're all ruined by it. And we have seen how ruined we are. How sinful our fallen condition is.

Now our misery! [note the final word of the answer to question 17 of the Shorter Catechism.¹]

There's no paradise on earth. And anyone looking for a paradise on earth is looking for a fool's paradise. There isn't one on this earth and there never will be.

We've lost communion with God. What happened when Adam sinned? Well he hid himself. He was afraid of God. The proof you're an unrepentant sinner is that you think God's far away. You don't want to be in His presence. Or spiritual things bore you.

Adam hid! And once God had pointed out to him, his guilt, God drove him out of the garden and wouldn't let him back again.

We've lost communion with God and we've been driven out of the garden. Ever since then, men and women have had a sort of "ought" inside them. No body feels that the world 'ought' to be as unhappy as it is. It's like there's a sort of memory in the human race of paradise and we think we 'ought' to be there, but we we're not and not able. That's what Ecclesiastes means when it says, 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity, says the preacher'. (KJV)

Men and women feel a sort of emptiness inside them and they don't know how to fill it. So they try to fill it with: travel or music or adventure ... or crime. All sorts of things. But they can't actually fill it. All they try, fails! There's still that emptiness inside. Of course there is. They were made for God. But they've lost that communion. There's an inward itching. The feeling that there 'ought' to be something else. So no one is truly content with what he is. Not happy with himself. Can't face it. Misery!

In addition to the misery of what 'ought' to be, we have God's anger hanging over us. He says, (Deuteronomy 27:26) '*Cursed is anyone who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out.*' (Which is echoed at Galatians 3:10 – on the sheet) Think about that for a moment. He's a living God. I live in His presence. Everything I've done I've done in His presence. He's angry with what I do. It's like I'm building up a great bank account of anger which is one day going to burst over my head. Every sin is putting more into this account. That's misery!

And life itself: For all of us this life ends in death. We ignore it but we can't escape it. Then there's sickness, unfulfilled need, war and rumours of war, discontent around us and throughout the earth; accident and various disasters, hate, lies, stealing, suspicion and mockery. All the ugly things that are trust on us by TV. Then we die and then comes the judgement. Enough misery?

Stuart Olyott suggests that most preachers would stop at this point, but he goes on further:

Jesus said, that after the judgement, "Unquenchable fire!" He said that!

¹ 17. *Into what state did the fall bring mankind?* The fall brought mankind into a state of sin and misery

Further, that after the judgement, would be “Outer darkness”.

When an unconverted person dies he goes to hell. But he's not that nice lovely uncle that you once had. Because there's such a thing as 'common grace' which means even unconverted people can smile. But when they die common grace is stripped from them. There are no smiles in hell! Your unconverted neighbour can lend you sugar or be kind or talk to you over the fence. But in hell 'common grace' is stripped away and there's no chit chat or kindness or warmth or neighbourly feeling and every thing that is good about an unconverted person is stripped away at death. That person is left in all his demonic ugliness. Without anything good in him at all. [You no doubt have heard the throw away line, “Well if I go to hell I'll be with all my mates!” But! They won't be 'matey', then, in any way!]

Hell is the place where there is no light. Not a flicker of a candle. Which the Bible calls, 'outer darkness'. And the only thing between the condition an unconverted person is in and 'outer darkness', is death. “Where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched: everlasting punishment”. Jesus said, “The smoke of their punishment goes up for ever and ever.”

What greater misery! This is the curse on sinful humankind, on all!

BUT for God's loving kindness to His chosen: (1 Tim 1:15)

¹⁵ Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners – of whom I am the worst.

That is the 'Good News'. That is the Gospel!

[2197]

May this be so for all the saints gathered here today.

(next week we start to look in detail at what this Wonderful Saviour does for us.)