

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS Genesis 3:1-7

Sin is not a popular reality in today's world of tolerance. We want to tone down the seriousness of sin by calling it a mistake, or human nature, or not such a big deal, as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else. But to God it is a serious offense that not only breaks relationship with Him, but can result in condemning ourselves to eternal death. Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death..." Sin is rebellion against God. Sin is saying, "I know what's best for my life, so I don't want you, God or anyone else telling me what to do." Sin is slapping God in the face in defiance; Sin is the nails in the hands and feet of Jesus on the Cross. Your sins and my sins are the reason Jesus was crucified. You will never understand the true nature of your salvation until you understand the true nature of your sin.

In earlier centuries theologians developed general lists or categories of sin. In the late 6th century Pope Gregory the Great worked with a list of 7 sins, later redefined by Thomas Aquinas. According to these theologians, these are the Seven Deadly Sins out of which all other sins find their root. Sin, as a way of life, completely separates us from God; sins are specific mind sets or actions that are deadly to spiritual progress and can lead us back into a life separated from God.

I found much of the material from this message from Billy Graham's book, The Seven Deadly Sins and a web site on the Deadly Sins (although you might want to screen the site a little.) The woodcarvings of the 7 deadly sins were done by Nick Hunter.

PRIDE

The woodcarving for *Pride* shows a deer or elk with a huge set of antlers. The Scripture says in Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction. A haughty spirit before a fall." Proverbs 16:5, "The LORD detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished."

When Adam and Eve sinned against God in the Garden of Eden, they ate of the fruit in order to be as wise as God – pride was the reason for their fall – to be equal to God. The proud forget about God and trust only in their own abilities. "Pride is excessive belief in one's own abilities, that interferes with the individual's recognition of the Grace of God. It has been called the sin from which all others arise. Pride is also known as Vanity." (Deadly Sins.com) Pride is not normal self-esteem; it's excessive

You know that you are guilty of the sin of spiritual pride, if throughout this sermon you are thinking of other people who are guilty of each sin on this list and not you! We point our finger at others, neglecting our three other fingers pointing back at us. We are too proud and arrogant to admit our own sin. Confess your pride. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. You can only enter the kingdom of God on your knees.

ANGER

Hunter's wood carving shows a creature that has torn off the *R* in the word *Anger* and is attacking it. "Anger is manifested in the individual who spurns love and opts instead for fury. It is also known as Wrath." (DS) Graham: "Anger is a heinous sin because it reveals the animal nature of man. Many people are charming, lovable and likeable until they become obsessed with a fit of rage, and then they are transformed into repulsive, irrational creatures more like wild beasts than civilized men." Ephesians 4:26-27; 29-32 says:

²⁶"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷and do not give the devil a foothold... ²⁹Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³²Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

We're not talking about righteous indignation over sin, or the wrathful anger of God.

Fredrick Buechner described it this way: Of the Seven Deadly Sins, anger is possibly the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past. To roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations to come. To savor the last toothsome morsel of both the pain you are giving the pain you are getting back. In many ways it is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you. Psalm 37:8 "Cease from anger and forsake wrath."

ENVY

Hunter's wood carving shows a very small creature looking enviously up at a huge horse. "Envy is the desire for other's traits, status, abilities, or situation." (DS) Thomas Aquinas said, "Charity rejoices in our neighbor's good, while envy grieves over it." James 3:14-16 says: ¹⁴But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. ¹⁵Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil.

"There's a Greek story about an envious man. His fellow citizens had erected a statue to one of their number who was a celebrated champion in the public games. But this man, a rival of the honored athlete, was so envious that he vowed that he would destroy that statue. Every night he went out into the darkness and chiseled at its base in an effort to undermine its foundation and make it fall. At last he succeeded It did fall – but it fell on him. He fell, a victim of his own envy." Proverbs 14:30 "A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones."

LUST/SEXUAL IMPURITY

Hunter's carving shows two creatures talking under an apple tree. "Lust is an inordinate craving for the pleasures of the body." (DS) Lust can take the good gift of sex given to human beings by God to enjoy in the context of married love and pervert and twist it into something God never intended it to be.

Billy Graham says, "The sin of impurity at the outset does not appear ugly and poisonous. Satan clothes his goddess of lust as an angel of love, and her appearance has deceived the strongest of men...Impurity is one of the most revolting of sins because it twists and distorts one of God's most precious gifts to man - human love - and drags it down to the level of the beast...Satan fails to speak of the remorse, the futility, the loneliness and the spiritual devastation which goes hand in hand with immorality."

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7 says:

³It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; ⁶and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. ⁷For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

GLUTTONY/APPETITE

Hunter shows a creature eating a pile of food. This is the sin of Gluttony. "Gluttony is an inordinate desire to consume more than that which one requires." (DS) Beware: Physical size of a person does not necessarily indicate gluttony. Beware of the sin of pride. Any sized person can be guilty of the sin of gluttony.

Graham: "Appetite is its god; the merchandise counter its altar...Danger of indulging our fleshly appetites and yielding to inordinate eating, drinking and revelry...When we cater to the appetites of the flesh to the exclusion and neglect of our souls, we become guilty of the sin of gluttony."

In Luke 12:18, Jesus told a parable of a man who saw the purpose of life simply to "Eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die." But he died suddenly - his life was required of him. When Jesus was tempted by the Devil to turn stones into bread, Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

In our country we avoid talking about this sin, but it is one that is rapidly growing worse. It endangers us to where we are only concerned about our own needs and shut out the needs of others in the world who are starving. We are more concerned about tail-gate parties than feeding our souls on a Sunday morning. Beware of the sin of gluttony

SLOTHFULNESS

Hunter's wood carving shows a slow moving sloth hanging upside down on a tree limb. "Sloth is the avoidance of physical or spiritual work" (DS) Sloth is laziness or idleness, an avoidance of work at all costs. Proverbs 19:15 "Laziness brings on deep sleep and the shiftless man goes hungry."

But sloth or laziness is not confined to labor. It clearly relates to laziness in spiritual things - an apathy and inactivity in the practice of our Christianity. You can be lazy about going to church, lazy about your prayer life, lazy about your Bible reading, lazy about accepting Jesus as your Savior - because you know what it will require of you.

AVARICE/COVETESSNESS/GREED

Hunter's wood carving shows one creature looking at a large necklace on another creature. "Avarice is the desire for material wealth or gain, ignoring the realm of the spiritual. It is also called covetousness or greed." (DS) 1 Timothy 6:10 "The love of money is the root of all evil." It's not money - it's the love of money!

Avarice cheats, robs, murders and slanders to achieve its desires. It is the source of suffering, misery and death - the love of money - the casinos, the lotteries feed on this sin in people's lives. 1 Corinthians 6:10 says that the greedy cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

The Scripture clearly teaches that it is not a sin to be rich - but the desire for money can choke out your spiritual life. The more money a person has, the more their security and trust is in money, than in God. Jesus said in Matt 19:24 that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. But with God, all things are possible.

These are the 7 deadly sins - out of which all others flow. What sin plagues you the most? I have good news. 1 John 1:8-9 says, "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

To get rid of these sins in your life you have to 1. Want to get rid of it; 2. Confess the sin to God & ask forgiveness 3. Open your heart to the renewing grace of Jesus Christ. 4. Ask the Holy Spirit to come into your heart & give you victory. Surrender your soul to the Lord Jesus Christ, and He will save you, deliver you from your sins, and give you life.