

Class 4: The Problem  
Flame Alive Course: Basic Christianity  
2024

Tonight I want to talk with you about THE PROBLEM. Note the following about THE PROBLEM. At the very heart of biblical revelation and the gospel of Jesus Christ is the idea of THE PROBLEM. The good news of the gospel comes to us in and through Christ because of the assertion and declaration of the BAD NEWS of Sin.

It is critically important in the solving of any problem to rightly understand what the problem is and the nature of the problem. It is only then that a true solution can be contemplated. Thus, if we are to understand the gospel and the saving work of Jesus Christ, we must first understand the PROBLEM, which is SIN.

Christianity says about SIN:

1. Sin as Described in the Bible:
  - i. Disobedience to God
    1. Colossians 3:6 "sons of disobedience" NASB
    2. Romans 1:18
    3. Ephesians 5:6
  - ii. Transgressing the law of God
    1. 1 John 3:4 "Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness."
  - iii. Rebellion
    1. Jeremiah 5:23 "This people have a stubborn and rebellious heart."
    2. Isaiah 30:1 "Woe to the rebellious children, who execute a plan, but not Mine. They make an alliance, but not by My Spirit, in order to add sin to sin."
  - iv. Darkness of soul
    1. Ephesians 4:18 "Being darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart."
    2. Ephesians 5:8 "You were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord" 5:11 "Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness"
    3. Romans 1:21 "their foolish heart was darkened"
  - v. Separation from God
    1. Isaiah 59:2 "your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God"
    2. Ephesians 2:12 "separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope without God in the world."
    3. 2 Thessalonians 1:9 "These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power."
2. Sinners as Described in the Bible: See Romans 3:9-18; 5:6-10; Ephesians 2:1-3, 12-13, 19; 4:17-19
  - i. Not righteous
  - ii. Not understanding of God
  - iii. Not seeking after God
  - iv. Useless/Worthless
  - v. Not doers of good
  - vi. Poisonous speech
  - vii. Violent

- viii. No fear of God
- ix. Helpless
- x. Sinners
- xi. Enemies of God
- xii. Disobedient
- xiii. Futile of mind
- xiv. Darkened in understanding/Ignorant
- xv. Excluded from the life of God
- xvi. Hard hearted/Calloused
- xvii. Impure
- xviii. Greedy

3. Sin is the central problem of all earthly problems.

- 1) Problem humans have with God
- 2) Problem humans have with guilt
- 3) Problem humans have with each other

4. Psychological

1. Depravity

- i. Moral depravity
- ii. Selfish depravity
- iii. Idolatrous depravity

2. Inability

- i. Inability to not sin
- ii. Inability to be righteous
- iii. Inability to save/deliver oneself

3. Guilt

- i. Guilt before the Law of God
- ii. Guilt before the Holiness of God
- iii. Guilt before the Judgment of God
- iv. Guilt in human experience
  - 1. Motivates one to hate those perceived to be holy
  - 2. Motivates one to create false religions
  - 3. Motivates one to hate God
  - 4. Motivates fear
    - a. Fear of the truth
    - b. Fear of death

4. Sin prevents in the human experience:

- i. Joy
  - 1. In holiness
  - 2. In God
  - 3. In the Truth of God
  - 4. In prayer
  - 5. In worship

- ii. Holy Aspirations
  - 1. To please and honor God
  - 2. To worship God
  - 3. To seek His glory
  - 4. To desire heaven
  
- iii. Holy Human Development
  - 1. Development of God-given Abilities and Talents
  - 2. Development of the Soul
  - 3. Development of Love for God and Joy in God
  - 4. Development of Love between Humans
  
- iv. Human Meaning
  - 1. Human Meaning and Human Existence
    - a. In Time
    - b. In Place
  - 2. Human Meaning and Human Purpose
    - a. Accomplishment
    - b. God's Glory

## 5. Relational

- 1. Consequences of sin in human relationships results in:
  - i. Friction
  - ii. Separation
  - iii. Misunderstanding
  - iv. Rejection
  - v. Hatred
  - vi. Political discord and oppression (loss of human freedom)
  - vii. Formation of identity groups
  - viii. Creation of false ethical systems
  
- 2. Sin prevents the following in relationships
  - i. Unselfish love
  - ii. Unselfish kindness
  - iii. Unselfish sacrifice

## 6. Spiritual

- 1. Falling short of God's glorious plan for humanity
- 2. Failing to love, trust, and seek God
- 3. Separation from God's fellowship

## 7. Characteristics of Sin in the Human Experience

- 1. Sin is Intrinsic to our Fallen Humanity
- 2. Sin is Ubiquitous and Universal in Human Experience
- 3. Sin is Destructive
  - i. To all that is right
  - ii. To all that is true
  - iii. To all that is good

- iv. To the human soul:
  1. The mind
  2. The affections
  3. The motives

#### Effects of the Sinful Fall of Adam and Eve and ongoing Consequences in the Human Race

1. Loss of Innocence and Original Righteousness
2. The Marring of the Image of God in the Human Essence
3. Fellowship with God is Broken
4. The Earthly Environment is Cursed
5. Divine Judicial Condemnation of Humans
6. Pain and Death
7. Transmission of Sinful Fallenness to Posterity

#### Logical Implications

1. All human spiritual problems, psychological problems, and relational problems (personal, familial, and societal) all stem in a fundamental way to the essential problem of sin.
2. The ultimate solution to the fundamental human problem must deal with sin.
3. Christianity declares that the gospel of Jesus Christ deals with sin in the following ways (more will be discussed in talks on the GOSPEL)
  - a. The Gospel and the Nature of Sin in the Human Soul
  - b. The Gospel and the Guilt of Sin before God
  - c. The Gospel and the Moral Filth of Sin before God
  - d. The Gospel and the Power of Sin in Human Earthly Experience
  - e. The Gospel and the Eradication of Sin in Human Glorification in Heaven