

St. Luke 15:1-7

Dear Friends in Christ,

John Andrew Quenstedt was a Lutheran theologian and professor at Wittenberg University in Wittenberg, Germany; died in 1688. He wrote: "The State of Corruption (corruption from sin) is that condition into which man voluntarily precipitated himself (that is, brought about) by his own departure from the chief good, thus becoming both wicked and miserable." (Heinrich Schmid, *The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis. 1961, p. 231.) The last words of that statement are the words I want to underscore: "becoming both wicked and miserable."

It has been stated; I do not know the author:

"A single sin, whatever its name, may enslave you for life. A single wrong turn of a railroad switch may cause a great disaster. A single leak in a ship may cause it to sink beneath the waves. It does not require many sins to ensnare the soul."

What actions of our past occasionally burn into our minds and hearts like a raging forest fire? What thoughts that must remain invisible? What words that have damaged? *Wicked and miserable*. Let's examine . . .

## LEST WE GROW WEARY

### I. If We're Worn.

If we're tired of hearing about sin the only alternative is to declare that there is no such thing as sin. We will have to convince ourselves that God didn't mean when He had John write, "Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness." (I Jn. 3:4) And this: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (I John 1:8) Or we could do as many do: argue that the times have changed and God changes with the times. Then we will pick and choose what we want from the Scriptures. Or, as an announcer for a so-called Christian television said: "Jesus' mission was to take away our negativity." What?? If making reference to sin is condemned and rejected, then making reference to sin becomes a sin! Think about it.

Years ago I was given a copy of this piece from a sermon (pastor and church were not given):

A...pastor was in his first year at a certain congregation. The congregation traditionally had a Confession of Sin as part of their worship liturgy. This pastor's predecessor had eliminated this prayer of confession from the service. He (the new pastor) tried to reinstate it. But resistance to the proposal was fierce. Some members thought that a confession of sin was too morbid a thing to do in church, where one's spirit was supposed to be lifted up. During the heat of the debate, one woman - an elder of the church - exclaimed, "But I don't need to apologize to God for anything!"

I understand why much of the Scriptures are ignored by much of the church. Mankind's quest for one world order where everyone can gather together and hold hands (in spite of how out-of-tune one might be with another), sing kumbaya and turn into a thousand points of light - well - the Psalmist's declaration *just ain't gonna cut it*: "no one living is righteous before you."! (Ps. 143:2b) And the New Testament follows that: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23)

The very, **very** specific reason Jesus came into this world is now offensive to much, if not most, of the church, because most of the church is marching with the world. However, the specific reason Jesus came into this world was announced to Joseph: "She (Mary) will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21) And then Scripture hits us with

this: “if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (I Jn. 1:8) The only recourse is to twist Scripture and worship so everyone can wear a smile on his or her....flesh!! We’ve got to get rid of the Scriptures, especially if we’re going to make the pursuit of marching with this world’s thinking a way life.

## II. Has Saved Us.

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.” (vv. 1-2)

That’s amazing, isn’t it? The Pharisees and Scribes hated Jesus as much as the self-righteous of our day, however with one difference. The Pharisees and Scribes understood the reality of sin. They said, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

So, we’re each sitting here and standing here well aware of an immeasurable and dirty stack of sin that belongs to each. A person can deny sin but only a narcissist can deny the reality of guilt! And guilt always points to something wrong about and within the person. You can psycho-babble and *atheist* that all you want. It’s sin! Period!

“Come now, let us reason together says the Lord; though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool.” (Is. 1:18) Thus, God speaks to us through Isaiah. God intervenes and cleans up the dirt. Knowing these frequently quoted words of Scripture is a must: “In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” - that is, the gift to gain His favor! (I Jn. 4:10)

I recently re-read an item about a fellow named Stan Mooneyham. The story goes that a number of years ago he was walking a trail in East Africa with some friends when he suddenly became aware of a wonderful odor. The story goes . . .

He looked up in the trees and around at the bushes in an effort to discover where it was coming from. Then his friends told him to look down at the small blue flower growing along the path. Each time they crushed the tiny blossoms under their feet, more of its sweet perfume was released into the air. Then his friends said, “We call it the forgiveness flower.”

This forgiveness flower does not wait until we ask forgiveness for crushing it. It does not release its fragrance in measured doses or hold us to a reciprocal arrangement... it merely lives up to its name and forgives - freely, fully, richly.

I find that an illustration of Christ’s love for us. “He welcomes sinners and eats with them.” The people who marched Him to Calvary were welcomed. The criminals crucified with Him were welcomed. Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector who exploited others, was welcomed. The woman who was about to be stoned to death for adultery was welcomed. We, whose sins crushed Him, are welcomed! He’s always there for us in His Word and Supper and at the Baptismal font to welcome unworthy and undeserving sinners, to grant them forgiveness of every sin, to assure them of a place in His eternal Kingdom! God says:

For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.’ (Is. 57: 15,16)

### III. Lest We Grow Weary.

So he told them this parable: "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. (vv. 3-7)

You do realize that each of us at one moment was that one sinner, right? He came after each of us. And all of heaven rejoiced! Rejoiced over you - me!

God help us to hear, cherish and take to heart the following words God says about us - keeping in mind that the references to Jacob and Israel in this Scripture are references to the church for all times - references to us: "But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel 'Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.'" (Is. 43:1)

He redeemed us and called each by name. We are his. Walk with that each day because the reality of our daily sin doesn't go away. Remember that because of the constant need of Jesus' forgiveness. It is not an issue. It is the issue! We must remember that - ***Lest We Grow Weary.***

Amen.

Pastor Bill Abbott

September 15, 2019

***“Lest We Grow Weary”***

- I. If We're Worn.*
- II. Has Saved Us.*
- III. Lest We Grow Weary.*

*Pilgrim Lutheran Church  
2155 North Oakland Avenue  
Decatur, Illinois 62526*