

A Mountain of Sins

By E. A. Johnston

sermonaudio.com

Bible Text: Ezekiel 18:4

Preached On: Sunday, May 4, 2014

Ambassadors For Christ Intl-USA

1335 Terrell Mill Road

Bldg 1462, Suite 100

Marietta, GA 30067

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/9225

This message I have for you this evening is on an extremely urgent matter and I cannot stress the severity of it enough. I wish I had the words to adequately convey to each of you the enormity of which I am about to speak but I fear I'm not a good enough preacher to arouse you from your settled opinion of yourself for there are surely some of you here tonight who are as I once was. I was a church member in good standing with a long track record of service. I had done much in the name of religion and I considered myself a saved individual but I was dead wrong. I was nothing more than an unconverted church member. I thought my sins were taken care of by Jesus and my salvation secured but I was dead wrong, friends, I was dead in sin and unaware of my great danger of dying as an unconverted church member.

You see, I had grown up under the modern evangelism of our day, the modern preaching of our day and I followed the advice that modern pastors gave me. I did what modern preachers told me to do in regard to my salvation but I got wrong advice, friends. Did you hear me? Wrong advice. They were poor guides to steer me to heaven. I had to read a dead man's sermon to get saved because the message I grew up under wasn't getting the job done in regard to my salvation because I had yet to hear a clear presentation of the gospel. Does that surprise you? All I ever heard was part of the gospel and that was, "God loves you. He has a wonderful plan for your life. Just invite Jesus into your heart, friend, and you will be saved." And I did that and I joined the church and served in it in several capacities: as a Sunday School teacher and so on. But the problem was, I wasn't saved. Did you hear me? I was not saved.

I was resting on the fact that I obeyed what the preacher told me to do for me to be saved but he was wrong, friend. He was dead wrong. Even though I was a church member in good standing, my sins still stood against me and were piled up to the sky. Like a great stack of boulders, I had a mountain of sins stacked against me and every time I sinned, it went to that already high mountain of sins. There was a great black mountain of sin looming over me ready to destroy me and if I had suddenly died, they would have fallen on me and I would have died in my sins and I would have dropped down to the regions of hell even though I was a Sunday School teacher and a witness for Jesus. Does that surprise you? It surprised me.

Like I said, I had to read a dead man's sermon to be saved. One day, I was reading a sermon which was written in the 1700s. It was written by a minister by the name of Solomon Stoddard. You may have heard of him, he was the grandfather of Jonathan Edwards. Well, his sermon just tore me up and as I was reading it, God showed me I was a lost person on my way to hell and as I argued with God about it and reminded him of my good church membership and all I had done in his name, he told me that not only was I on my way to hell but that I deserved to go there. I got lost that day, friends. I got lost. I realized I was without the wedding garment of justification. I needed a remedy for sin and there was not one thing I could do about it. Just inviting Jesus into my heart wasn't getting the job done. It wasn't that easy. I had yet to strive to enter into the kingdom of heaven and take it by violence. I had yet to find that narrow strait gate and press in.

I wrestled with God that afternoon on the floor of my study for about three hours as a completely lost person. I finally got to the place where I agreed with God that I was lost and I agreed with him that I deserved hell and he had every right to send me there. It was then and only then that I saw a ray of hope appear on the horizon. The Son of Righteousness whom I often spoke about in Sunday School was now appearing to me in a vivid recognizable way. I saw a revealed Christ and his sufficiency to save me. I looked to him, friend. I looked to him and him alone and bless God, I became an object of mercy. I was able to exercise repentance toward God and faith in Christ and was born again. I was a changed individual before I got up from my knees. God changed me that day.

Since that time, I've stepped in my share of mud puddles in sin but every time, the Good Shepherd has gone after me and brought me back to his side and the sanctification process is actively working in my life, making me more and more like Jesus, making me hate sin and loathe it more and more, making me desire holiness more and more. God is still working in me for I am a work in progress until he takes me to glory. But the only thing that could remove that black mountain of sin was the blood of Jesus but for years I was a deceived church member. I was deceived by a modern gospel that could not save me and I had a mountain of sin stacked up against me.

How is it with you, friend? You may think that the foundation which you rest upon is sound but what if it's sand? Is there a mountain of sin looming over you? This message is in particular to the unconverted church member. I have never known a time in my lifetime when the church at large was comprised of unconverted individuals who haven't a clue of their true condition, who rest upon a false foundation of carnal security, relying on a good opinion of themselves and a long track record of service. But unless they are converted, they will die in their sins and be cast into hell and its miseries for all eternity.

You may sit on a deacon board. You may sing in the choir. You may actively witness for Christ, read your Bible and say your prayers yet you may be dead in sin and completely unaware of your great peril and danger. A mountain of sins lie upon you and you know it not and that itself seals your doom. That's the title of my message tonight, friends, "A Mountain of Sins." Our text will be taken from Ezekiel 18:4 which declares,

“Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.”

This verse in Ezekiel speaks of sin's penalty. I bring before you tonight the gravity of this aspect of a mountain of sins as seen in the following relations. I want us to see a mountain of sins: 1. as a weight upon you that you do not feel. 2. As a warrant to arrest you to bring you to justice. 3. As a witness against you that will follow you into eternity.

Let's look at this first aspect of a mountain of sins as a weight upon you that you do not feel. A person who is lost spiritually is completely unaware of their spiritual condition. They are in a sense, dead to it. They have no ability to recognize it and this is because a lost person is dead in sin. They serve Satan. They live for the world and live to satisfy their flesh. Ephesians declares,

“1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath.”

Now notice several truths found in this passage from Ephesians. A lost person is dead in sin. They walk according to the prince of darkness and they are considered children of disobedience. They fulfill the lusts of the flesh and are by nature children of wrath. Listen friends, all of mankind enters this world with a ruined nature that has a bent toward sin. When Adam fell in the Garden, he just didn't skin his knee a little rather, he fell head long and died spiritually that day and all of Adam's descendants are born with a ruined nature and are under a curse because of sin. Man drinks iniquity like it's water, friend. He hates holiness and the attributes of a holy God.

It is critically important to have this basis in our understanding of this aspect of a mountain of sins be a weight upon you that you do not feel. You do not feel the weight of sin because you do not recognize sin, you have no conviction of sin, you sin recklessly, habitually. But listen friend, just because you cannot feel the weight of your sins does not alter the fact that you stand beneath a load, a mountain of sin. Your sins are stacked up against you yet you do not feel the weight of them. But pay very close attention to the following indictments which are brought before you. Your sins are like a mountain for the following reasons: time and time again, you have sinned from your youth up to the present hour and your sins are many and great. These sins accumulate like a great pile of boulders and each time you commit another sin, whether in word, deed or thought, they go one-by-one, stacked like boulders, one atop the other to that great standing pile of sins which represent your life as a sinner who has broken the strict and severe law of God.

Picture in your mind a great mountain and you stand beneath its shadow. You gaze up at that towering mountain above you and you see the reality of it, the largeness of it, the immovable aspect of it. A mountain cannot be moved. A bulldozer wouldn't even make

a dent in it. Dynamite would only blow a small chunk off of it yet it would still stand, intractable, immoveable, unalterable. There that mountain stands as it reaches up to the sky and you must and cannot deny the fact that your sins are like that mountain, friend. Each boulder is a debt that needs to be paid and you have no way to pay it. It's a debt that needs to be paid because it is a transgression of God's holy law and justice must be carried out. The sentencing of the law must be carried out, sin must be punished and you have a huge mountain of debt which are your accumulated sins which cry out against you. If the stones could talk, they would groan. They would cry under the weight of your sins. The Bible says we have turned everyone to his own way.

Listen friend, a sin is going our way when we know it isn't God's way. And do you know what else? God requires perfection to get into his heaven and we are not perfect. Quite the contrary, we are big sinners and man drinks iniquity like it's water. You live to please yourself. You live after the course of this world and you sit on the throne of your life and rule there but you have broken the law of God time and time again. There are boulders on that mountain which represent your grievous sins: the boulder of lies, the boulder of thievery, the boulder of fornication, the boulder of adultery, the boulder of taking God's name in vain. Time and time again, you have transgressed the strict law of God and each act, each thought, each word is another sin, another boulder stacked up upon the other boulders from years past that now rise up like a great black mountain of sin and it's a picture of your life, friend.

But the sad thing is, you do not feel the weight of them. How is it you cannot feel the great weight of that mountain of sin? And it is the very fact that you do not feel that weight which seals your doom to an eternal hell. Sinners are cast into hell to satisfy the justice of God, a God who must punish sin. You have a sin debt that must be paid off in a place of punishment called hell. But the thing that would be most alarming to you is the stark reality of this mountain of sin hanging over you, ready to crush you, ready to destroy you and remove you from this world. This black mountain of sin hangs over you, leans over you, ready to destroy you at any moment. It could end your life. Listen to what the word of God declares to those who presume that they have years yet to live.

“For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them.”

Listen friend, sudden death is all around you. You could be gunned down while you're standing in line or sitting in a movie theater. A car could run you down while you're out exercising. If God wanted to remove you, he could take you out of here so suddenly and unexpectedly and it would be as easy to him as turning over his hand to snuff you out. That great mountain of sin is a weight you do not presently feel but if you only had God's good grace to see it, it would greatly alarm you of your danger of dying in your sins under that great mountain which will crush you.

The next aspect I want you to see is your sins as a warrant to arrest you to bring you to justice. When a person is caught breaking the law and they evade arrest, then a warrant is

written for their arrest. The police will come and get you, friend. If you're caught breaking the law, they will lock you up until you can be tried before a judge who will determine what your sentence will be for the sentencing of the law must be carried out in order for us to have any law on this land. If we didn't, you'd be afraid to go to bed at night or walk the streets in the daytime if there weren't any laws or police force to enforce those laws to protect you from someone trying to rob you and kill you at every turn. As in the law of the land, there is a divine law of God written in the Ten Commandments and God takes notice when a guilty rebel breaks his law. The sentencing of the law must be carried out and that person punished for breaking that law. God's law is strict and severe and you must be perfect to be held up against it. But the trouble is, no man is. All are sinners who have broken the strict law of God and God is a God who must punish sin because he is holy. Justice must be carried out by this Judge and shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? So, your sins will be a warrant to arrest you and bring you to justice.

Allow me to make you aware of something which you may not have before realized. It is this last aspect of which I mentioned: that your sins will be as a witness against you to follow you into eternity. Listen friend, when you die, your sins follow you into eternity. They will follow you as a witness against you. You cannot escape them. The Bible declares that men die and after this the judgment. There is a coming day of judgment where each one of us will be held up against the broken law and try as we may to escape this time of judgment, we cannot even by death. Your sin will find you out, friend. Your sins will chase you like a bloodhound in hell. They will be as a witness against you. They will surely chase you down, friend, and then line up against you like soldiers in a great army and they will stand there as a witness against you. Your sins will chase you down, friend, and find you at last. They will stand one-by-one in eternity as an indictment against you. They will line up at the great judgment and condemn you. There is certain doom for you, friend, if you stand on your own merits before that law and that Judge.

How then shall one escape from all of this? You must stand on the merits of another. I know I'm a sinner and I need a sin substitute in the person of Jesus Christ and so do you, friend. So do you. Perhaps you took a Jesus you knew nothing about. You came to Christ without ever seeing your need of him. Salvation was a thing you did. You made yourself a Christian and you joined the church but if you are honest with yourself, you've never been changed. Inside, instead of peace, peace, peace, it is war, war, war. You've never had any victory over sin. You live in defeat and you've gotten used to that kind of life. Your Bible is a closed book. Your eyes are dry and your heart unchanged yet you consider your condition good. You have never seen yourself as a vile sinner in need of a Savior.

I can't save you, friend, nobody can. You surely cannot save yourself. I can say this, Jesus Christ came to save sinners. He hung on a bloody cross because of sin. The nails in his hands and feet were my sins. My sins nailed him to that tree. He endured all that suffering for me. But the thing that breaks my heart more than any other is the fact that while on that cross there he had to experience the turned face of the Father. He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Hell came to Calvary that day, friend and God could not look at his Son because he cannot look on sin. I need a substitute for

sin and Jesus was that for me. I can't stand on my own merits against God's holy law but I can stand safely in his merits and know that I am under the blood. He paid my sin debt for me. He wiped out that great mountain of sin which stood against me. My sins are washed in the blood but I had to be awakened to my lost condition. The Bible says in Proverbs,

“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.”

That's the state of many, friends, in the church today.

Let me preach to you some Scripture and perhaps God will come through in his majesty to your heart. Old Bud Robertson, the old evangelist, used to say that he was lost until one day God dropped a chunk of glory in his soul. Let's pray that this would be your case, friend. Charles Spurgeon always said: “It was the preached word that saved me.” Let me now preach the word, friend, and it is my prayer that you get to the place where you no longer hear the voice of this poor preacher but you hear His voice as it comes in with majesty and authority to you personally. Listen friend, to hear if the word of God indicts you.

“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”

“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

“Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”

“How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?”

“Thou lovest evil more than good and lying rather than to speak righteousness.”

“If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacle.”

“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me ye that work iniquity.”

“Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot and take him away and cast him into outer darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous unto life eternal.”

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

“And he shall cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

“As a tree fall so it shall lie.”

“He that is unjust, let him be unjust still and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still and he that is holy, let him be holy still.”

“God is angry with the wicked every day. If he turn not, he will whet his sword. He hath bent his bow and made it ready.”

“Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors.”

“To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.”

“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”

“Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him and to our God for he will abundantly pardon.”

“Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”

“Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.”

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”