

KILLING SIN – PART 4: SUMMARY & ADMONISHMENTS

Ferndale Baptist Church – May 2015

Welcome/Pray

SUMMARY & DISTILLATION OF MANY THOUGHTS AND IDEAS WE'VE TALKED ABOUT SO FAR.

HERE ARE SOME SPECIFIC PRACTICAL TACTICS FOR KILLING SIN – all of which we have covered in some form over the past 3 sessions.

- 1) WE MUST ALWAYS FIGHT OUR SIN IN THE CONTEXT OF THE GOSPEL
 - a. Keep in mind the twofold truth contained in the Gospel
 - i. Our sins are forgiven
 - ii. We are accepted as righteous before God b/c of Jesus Christ
 - b. There is no greater motivators for engaging in this battle than the truths of the Gospel
 - c. The Gospel is the killing ground for sin; it is also our platform for worship
 - i. Worship suffocates sin
- 2) WE MUST LEARN TO RELY ON THE ENABLING POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
 - a. Rom. 8:13 – it is by the Spirit we put to death the flesh
 - b. If we forget the Spirit, our default is to resort to our flesh – our human willpower
 - c. We never get beyond our inability to battle sin – we are in constant need, so we must cultivate in attitude and practice a continual dependence on the Holy Spirit
- 3) WHILE DEPENDING ON THE SPIRIT, WE MUST ALSO RECOGNIZE OUR RESPONSIBILITY IN KILLING SIN
 - a. Keeping the truths of our inability (dependence) and our responsibility in equal mind is difficult
 - i. We tend to emphasize one, forget other – DON'T
 - b. “Let’s work like Arminians and sleep like Calvinists” – matt chandler
- 4) WE MUST IDENTIFY SPECIFIC SINS TO KILL

- a. Watch & pray
 - b. Read Scripture
 - c. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal
 - d. Ask others around you
 - e. Watch the circumstances that facilitate that sin
 - f. Cultivate a humility and a willingness to face sin
- 5) WE MUST DRAW OUT SPECIFIC APPLICABLE SCRIPTURES FOR SPECIFIC SINS
- a. Psalm 119:11 – I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.
 - b. Store up – set aside for future need
 - c. Know what the Word says – memorize, meditate, reflect, study, pray over
 - d. Seek the Spirit’s power in doing what the Word says
 - e. Seek accountability with others
- 6) WE MUST CULTIVATE A PRACTICE OF PRAYER OVER THE SINS WE TOLERATE
- a. We have talked about prayer already here, but it is important to single out prayer as a specific tactic in killing sin
 - i. Prayer allows us to consciously acknowledge our need of the Gospel and Holy Spirit
 - ii. Allows us to consciously acknowledge consistent sin patterns
- 7) WE MUST INVOLVE OTHER BELIEVERS WITH US IN OUR STRUGGLES AGAINST SIN
- a. Mutual relationships where we seek to exhort, encourage, and pray for each other
 - b. Mutual vulnerability, which draws sin out of the dark
 - c. When appropriate, it requires confession, asking forgiveness

We’ll take some time to look at what killing sin is and is not:

WHAT KILLING SIN IS NOT

1.) KILLING SIN IS NOT UTTERLY ROOTING IT OUT AND DESTROYING IT – That is to say, the presence of sin will always be with us until Christ returns to take us home.

- This is our DESIRE, but it will not be accomplished in this life; but our goal in dealing with sin is its demise and destruction – we want nothing less than to murder our own sin
- Lord willing, we will have seasons of victory, maybe even almost constant triumph.
- BUT – the utter destruction of it will not come in this life.
- Even Paul – of whom there was no Christian equal, I would say – tells us in Phil. 3:12 – “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.”
- We will not be complete here – we will not experience the fullness of shalom here – we will have fullness only in Christ.
- Don’t lose heart in the ebb and flow of your battle with sin – this is not indicative of how the war will end.
 - Fight with assurance
 - But fight knowing you will need to endure to the end to see sin dead at your feet – and that will come at the hands of Christ.

2.) KILLING SIN IS NOT MERELY THE CHANGING OF OUTWARD APPEARANCES

- Killing sin is not primarily an external practice, and it is not mainly concerned with the outward aspects of sin
- Remember – sin we see on the outside are ripples on the surface of a vast, dark ocean
- The danger in approaching the killing of sin as mainly external is this:
 - You will merely trade obvious sins for less obvious ones
 - Killing sin is not substituting one for another
 - Yearn for a heart that is more HOLY not more CUNNING in hiding sin
- There may be apparent outward change – there ought to be – but this should be a by-product of a changed inward heart

3.) KILLING SIN IS NOT MERELY THE IMPROVEMENT OF YOUR NATURAL INCLINATIONS OR STRENGTHS

- Everyone has certain strengths & weaknesses – killing sin is not improving on your strengths and moving on
- For example – greed is not something you struggle with; you give 20% of your income in tithe, you are by nature generous
 - Don't then “fight sin” by saying “in an effort to kill sin, I will now give %25”
 - By contrast, if you struggle with trusting God in your finances – that is a major area of sin. You need to put emphasis in killing sin in that arena.
- It's like an awkward class reunion – “Remember how good I was at football? I'm still really good.” “Great. How's the rest of your life?”
- Killing sin should primarily be done on the battleground of our weak areas, not our strengths.

4.) KILLING SIN IS NOT MERELY DIVERTING SIN

- If you're going to dam up a stream of water, there are a couple ways to do it
 - You can dam it up so that the flow becomes a trickle, or stops altogether – which is what you want
 - You can dam it up so that the flow simply goes in another direction – the flow is diverted – this is not what you want in killing sin
- The account of Simon the Sorcerer in Acts 8
 - He was still “captive to sin” – it was the same desire for power and acclaim expressing itself in a different context
 - Same river, different riverbed
- Killing sin is not simply trading one lust for another, this fear for that one
- “He has changed his master, but is a servant still.” – Owen

5.) KILLING SIN IS NOT MERELY THE EXPERIENCE OF OCCASIONAL VICTORY – or, killing sin is ONGOING

- We have all had times where our sin is plain before us – and we are livid, resolved, we are murderous against it; we get so worked up about it that we experience a season of victory – only later to be doing the same thing again
 - We must be careful not to exchange momentary indignation or resolve for ongoing war against sin

- i.e. – boy whacking a bee’s nest – he waits for it to settle back down before going back to it
- Or a thief who makes a noise – lights come on, there is rush, alarm, action – he simply waits, then when all is quiet, resumes his task
 - Sin will do the same – “play possum” until you forget it is there – WATCH & PRAY
- Do not simply suppress sin – even when it seems to be lying still, keep searching it out, keep killing it, keep watching, keep praying

KILLING SIN IS...

1.) KILLING SIN IS A CONSTANT CONTENTION AGAINST SIN

- Recognizing the enemy – which has been a large part of this series
 - We should be intimately acquainted with our enemy in order to fight it; to learn its intentions, goals, desires, strategies, methods, strengths and weaknesses
 - To know where, when, how it operates
- Resolving to use whatever means necessary to destroy it
 - Employment of all faculties – mind, affections, will
- Always be READY
 - Always be on the offensive with the spiritual weapons at our disposal
 - To always be guarding our life and doctrine carefully
 - Even when we are having a season of victory, where the struggle is less – to be finding new ways to kill that sin
 - Col 3:5 – Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

2.) KILLING SIN IS AN ONGOING WEAKENING OF SIN HABITS

- We know a great deal of how sin operates from James 1 – but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.
- So we weaken that tendency by seeking to take away whatever it is that gives our sin it’s strength and power
- what is our “evil desire”, that thing that tempts us? Sex? Power? Security? Control? Not being lonely?
- WEAKEN THAT DESIRE, cut it off

- This is what Gal. 5:24 refers to as crucifying the sinful nature with its passions and desires
- 2 Cor 4:16 prescribes that we do this “day by day”
- You weaken sin habits by constantly crucifying them
- A man who is crucified is weakened in an ongoing way – this was the whole point of crucifixion
 - At first, he struggles, he strives, maybe he’s loud; he cries out with strength, with might
 - But over time, his struggling becomes less... he becomes quieter as strength and will fade
- When we crucify the sinful nature – it is the same. It gets weaker and weaker over time, over years.
 - It may at times seem stronger – just as a man on a cross may cry out loudly or struggle more fervently from time to time
 - Paul describes this in Rom. 6 – If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.
 - We crucify sin to that end – so that the body of sin might be done away with
 - All sin – whether of OMISSION or COMMISSION – whether it encourages us to do evil or keeps us from doing good – must be kept on that cross constantly – or it will grow stronger and rise up
 - There is a vine that grows up though my deck... I chop it, it is gone for a while... but it always comes back.
 - That’s not killing sin – killing sin would be crawling under that deck and ripping that thing up by it’s roots.
 - Otherwise, you’re essentially pulling leaves off a tree – they’ll just grow back.
- Killing sin is an ongoing weakening of sin habits
 - Not ongoing by pulling leaves off a tree
 - Ongoing by attacking the root – by crucifying the sin nature, cutting off those things that feed it, making it progressively weaker and weaker and weaker

3.) KILLING SIN WILL SHOW GRADUAL MEASURES OF VICTORY

- Let’s define what we mean

- We don't mean that sin is completely and utterly gone, that we'll never have to deal with it again
 - Phil. 3:12 – “Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect...”
 - Victory over sin is not merely “I didn't do the thing I was supposed not to do.”
 - This is not ultimately about our actions
- Victory over sin includes several aspects
 - Recognizing when sin and temptation are at work – not being suckered in. This is bringing to light that which was hidden in darkness.
 - Seeing sin's pull, draw, and effects lessened
 - Not just a roller-coaster, manic bipolar thing – more like a pendulum swing... slow, steady growth. Even 2 steps forward, 1 step back
 - Sin will hinder your duties before God less, and your peace will be less frequently interrupted and with less depth
 - You will see an increase in the desire and implementation of those graces that keep sin crucified – spiritual disciplines, etc. – those good things you have that God has given you that oppose sin
 - Again, we're not talking extreme ups & downs here... more like a steady climb
 - I think the biggest thing that gradual victory over sin looks like is HUMILITY
 - A heart that humbled before God is fertile ground for the Holy Spirit, rocky ground for sin.
 - Sin never takes easy root in humility.
 - And that's where we'll pick up next week – THINKING MUCH UPON THE GREATNESS OF GOD and the cultivation of humility and joy in Him
 - A heart that thrives with humble joy is not a place where sin can grow

KILLING SIN WILL CULTIVATE A HATRED OF ALL SIN. We must hate all sin, not just the ones that trouble us.

“Putting on the Spirit, rehearsing the good news, exercising self-control, and serving each other within a community of believers are not ways we

become less ourselves, but ways in which we rid ourselves of sin — of our old selves — in order to become more of who we were designed to be.” – Marshall Segal, *Desiring God* Editor

Killing sin is going back over and over and over to the gospel. Not because we weren't saved when we believed with the gift of faith. But because we forget. We forget to treasure the beauty and grace and glory and wonder of God. Sin at its root is failing to see and treasure God for who He is. So much if not all of killing sin is redirecting the trajectory of your life toward the glory and wonder and beauty of the glorious gospel of Jesus.

At the cross, the Word reveals to us, in no uncertain terms, the Gospel - the GOOD NEWS - of Christ.

- That God the Father sent Christ to save us – from ourselves, from our sin, from death, hell, from the just wrath of a holy God
- The Gospel is Good News anchored not in religion, but in love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to die on the cross as a substitute in our place, taking the punishment we deserve for our sins
- Eph. 2:8-9 tell us it is by grace we are saved through faith, not of works – the Gospel is a gift from God; we cannot add to it, or take away from it - we reject it or we accept it.

The remedy for sin, the killing ground for sin begins with and rests upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news

- We need to daily preach the Gospel to ourselves - keep it in the forefront of our minds
- To live our daily lives in the light of this good news and the redeeming power of Christ's life, death, and resurrection
- To prioritize what we do and say and think according to this message
- We are in constant need of application of the Gospel in our lives; we need to be saturated by it so that the sin that remains in us will not strangle out the joy that is in the good news of Jesus Christ.

The work of Christ is finished. If you are truly a believer and a follower of Jesus Christ, the overwhelming power of your sin nature is broken. You are no longer a slave to sin and sin no longer defines who you are.

- Yet – the effects & influence of sin remain.
- Our new nature is in Christ – but our old nature is still with us until Christ returns.
- Paul in Romans 7 – “So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my

members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. (Romans 7:21-23 ESV)”

We are armed to fight, to do violence against that enemy within

- So we are in constant need of the application of the Gospel in our lives
 - o We are not perfect, but we are being perfected
 - o Where we once fought God in our sin, we now join the cause for His glory and emulate Christ in killing sin!

Perhaps you are here and today and you do not know Jesus. Or you are merely following the faith of others and have not made it your own. You would not consider that you have a relationship with Him. Maybe there is something inside you even now that tells you this sounds crazy. Or maybe you get this whole idea of sin - a little too well. Something tells you your sin can never ever be forgiven. That is your flesh, your sin nature and it lying to you.

- I would urge you to call out to Jesus to save you from sin and restore you to relationship with the God you were created to know and worship.
- We are not talking about joining a religion - religion is you trying to be good enough to earn God’s favor or tip the scales
- Let me save you the suspense of wondering - you aren’t good enough. You never will be. Only One was - Jesus Christ. Our only hope of relationship with God comes through Him, who lived a life you could never live, died in your place to pay a price you could never pay and rose again to prove that He is in fact the only way to be restored to God
- The way will be difficult, but there is joy in the journey, and shalom at the end

If you are here today and you are a follower of Christ, you have trusted Him, He is your Lord and Savior - know this:

You may fight for a long, long, long time – but victory will be yours; it will come at the appointed time, and it will come from the hand of Jesus

Maybe you know exactly what I’m talking about, and every day you kill sin for the joy set before you in Christ. Carry on and don’t grow weary.

Maybe you’re here and you are tired and struggling. I suspect this is most of us. Have your heart settled on that expectation – that Christ will prevail, that though you struggle and are tired, your sin will die, that our souls will be completely satisfied in Him, in His glory

in addition to perfecting us with the righteousness of Christ, God continues to make us holy by growing us each day to be more like Jesus. This is not about being perfect now, but about being perfected.

The Word offers a promise to the people of God: *Philippians 1:6 - And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

He who began this good work in your life will complete this good work. He will not stop halfway through the process and give up. He will finish what he has started. We have the capacity now to join Him in His great cause.

Fight – and you will see your flesh crumble
Fight well, fight hard – on the other side is peace, shalom.

Don't give up hope. God is for you. Christ has redeemed you. The Spirit arms you. Take courage, take heart. Just a little longer and sin will fall, Jesus will reign, and we shall see shalom.

Until then - for the glory of God, be killing sin, or sin will be killing you.