



DEXTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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“More to Sin”

Psalm 51

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Hi. My name is Dan Kapela. Usually you will find me playing drums in the praise band. About once a month, I send out to men who come to the Tuesday morning breakfast, a thing I call Grace Mail. It is usually something I've written, or found that I feel Christ is directing me to share with other men. A few weeks ago, I sent a copy to Matt and Steve first because it was a little different and more in depth from what I usually send, and I wanted their opinion first. All of you should take note of this, because, before I really knew what was going on, they had penciled me in to speak here today and to share what God directed me to write.

How do you suppose it is that in spite of all we know about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, there can be so much sin in our lives? **What is it about sin that we allow it to creep into our thoughts, into our lives, into our relationships?** Because we are human, we are subject to all the failings of human beings. But, does that answer the question about sin? Can we simply say sin is in our life because we are weak humans and unable to stop it? **Or is there more?**

Matt, in his second sermon here at DUMC, told a story about Eagles. I'd like to reuse that story to illustrate what often happens when we sin.

National Geographic aired a special one night about how eagles catch fish in lakes. They fly high above the water but their eyesight is so good they can spot fish in the water below. When they see one they fold their wings back and aim directly for the water, going as fast as 130mph. When they reach the water they spread their wings, reach out their talons, grab the fish, and begin flying back to shore. On this TV special, they showed film of a very unusual occurrence. An eagle made a dive for a fish and grabbed it in its talons. But the fish was much larger than the eagle realized. As it began to fly to the shore you could see the strain in the eagle's flight. It was not going to make it to shore with this huge fish. It then tried to drop the fish, to let go of it. But the talons of the eagle had dug into the flesh of the fish so deeply that it could not pull them out. It struggled but to no avail. Slowly the eagle descended into the lake and drowned, unable to let loose its catch.

Sometimes, like the eagle, we grab on to something that can be dangerous. We have the illusion of control and believe we can stop whenever we choose. The internet, television, gambling, drugs, and many other things can become a habit or a lifestyle. One day we try to let go and we discover that we are no longer in control. And just like the eagle, **it will surely drag us down!** *Psalm 51, Verse 1 & 2 says:*

“Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin.”

I can understand how David must have felt in **Psalm 51**. David was a man after the Lord's heart and still he was unable to stop himself from sinning. David had just committed some pretty grievous sins and Psalm 51 was his prayer confessing and seeking God's forgiveness. David had come to know that he had broken **God's word, and also broken God's heart**. I've been thinking a lot lately about how often I fail to stop sin from entering my life.

Sometimes I try to justify sin by saying, "Oh it's such a small thing", or by telling myself "it really doesn't hurt anybody." Sometimes I sin because I am angry and I want to lash out and let others know about my anger. Sometimes, I get my feelings hurt and so I want others to know about that, and to feel some responsibility for those hurts.

Sometimes.....I know that I am doing wrong, but just like David, I go ahead and sin anyway. Without our faith in God, we could convince ourselves that we have little or no control and that sin is just a part of life. Even though each of us knows better, I am convinced we all find ways to justify sin. **Paul speaks so clearly in Romans 7, Verse 18 thru 20 about his struggle with sin.**

"I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't. When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it: the sin within me is doing it."

We may not want to admit it to anyone. We may not even want to bring it before the Lord. Sometimes we put sin in different corners of our world and work hard to convince ourselves it doesn't really exit. In the end, all of this is just fooling ourselves and building a wall between God and HIS gift of salvation to us. So, what can we do?

I've developed a habit where I begin each day reading my devotionals. I say my prayers, and have hope that the day will be a day without sin. Of course, that never happens, because all were born into sin and are unable to keep sin out of our lives. Even with reading my devotionals, reading my bible, and saying my prayers, I can't keep sin from knocking at my door. At the end of the day, I find there is always something to confess; to bring before Jesus, and to seek HIS forgiveness.

Over the past several years, I've tried to bring myself to a point where I try not to make excuses for sin. I have to take ownership for my part of why Christ had to die on that cross. I remember watching "The Passion of the Christ" when it first came out. When the hammer drove that first nail into Christ's hand, I began to sob.

I knew at that moment it was my sin, all of our sins, that were responsible for driving those nails. It was also at that moment that I understood I could be forgiven. I could be cleansed and reborn through the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ.

I find comfort and reassurance in the words of 1 John 1, Verse 9:

"But if we confess our sins to Him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong."

I believe there is no time to waste. No time to put off. No time to fool ourselves. No time to make excuses. Make no mistake, Christ is coming. We know this! Yet, we think we will always have time; time to make amends, time to confess, time to clear our conscience, time to cleanse our souls. But.....do we? **There it is again, the unmistakable sound of a hammer pounding. Pounding over and over again.**

Jesus said he will come in the night like a thief. We must prepare for HIS coming. We have got to get right with God now. Not later, but now.

Every sin, no matter how small or how large we make it, is simply sin....period. God doesn't distinguish the size of sin. WE DO! HE hates all sin. All sin is wrong in the eyes of our Lord.

So what in the world are we waiting for? What stops us from coming before our Lord and Savior and seeking HIS forgiveness? Sin does that. Sin sneaks through our life and, if we let it, it will convince us that it's ok.

It's only a little sin!

Surely it's not enough to convict us.

But it will.

It will convict us so fast and so deeply that it will steal away God's promise of eternal life with HIM, if we let it. **There it is again - that pounding noise.** Every time I hear it, or think about it, I know it is bringing me closer to death and an eternity away from life with Jesus. **That is why there isn't any time to waste. No time to put it off. No time to "wait until we're stronger, or more comfortable."** HE died that we might live! He suffered that we might be forgiven! **He rose that we would have hope!**

He reigns that we might be given eternal life in heaven with HIM! James writes in Chapter 5, Verse 16 that we are to:

"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and wonderful results."

I have struggled with this verse as I am sure many of you have. First was the terrifying thought that I could barely bring them before God. How could I ever talk about them to another person? For me, the answer to this fear came through my involvement in small groups.

I learned to pray with others during the Praise Band practice several years ago. Often we would meet and pray, sometimes for more than an hour. No matter what was on our minds or hearts, it became a safe place to bring it up in prayer.

Next it was at the Tuesday morning Men's breakfast. During prayer time, I learned how to begin asking for prayer for myself. Now, I am in another small group. Because of the salvation that Jesus Christ offers, we say to one another all that James tells us to do in 5:16.

Yes, it is still difficult and yet I find healing in a way I don't think I could find elsewhere.

Maybe you already are part of a small group.

Maybe you would like to be in one but just don't know how to get started.

Bring it before God and ask him to show you how to begin.

Now, what can we do?

Bring your heart before the Lord.

Give all of your life to Jesus.

Ask that you would be healed!

Feel as HIS compassions and know you are forgiven.

Know deep in your heart that HE lives there.

For the Lord is our source of strength.

WE fail, but HE DOESN'T!

We can't, but HE CAN!

I want to play a song that really speaks to my heart. Let us take this time to listen to the words of Ray Boltz as he sings "Feel The Nails"

and to silently come before the Lord.