

Burden Bearing

• Lesson Two •

Sin Leaves Burdens in Its Wake

1. Our sins burden us with guilt
2. All sins come with consequences

Worship

Take a moment to answer these questions privately in your own heart:

What past sin still lingers in your conscience?
What current sin is weighing heavy on your heart?

Now let us confess all our sinfulness and ask for forgiveness.

M: Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near to God with a true heart and confess our sins unto God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

M: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

C: Who made heaven and earth.

M: I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord."

C: And you forgave the iniquity of my sin.

C: O almighty God, merciful Father, I, a poor, miserable sinner, confess unto you all my sins and iniquities, with which I have ever offended you, and justly deserve your temporal and eternal punishment. But I am truly sorry for my sins and sincerely repent of them, and I pray you, of your boundless mercy, and for the sake of the holy, innocent, bitter sufferings and death, of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to be gracious and merciful to me, a poor, sinful being.

M: Based on your public confession of sin, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God unto all of you, and by the authority of the command from my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Introduction

Keith wanted intimate relations with his wife more often than she did. After another refusal from her in the bedroom, his frustration got out of control. He stormed out to a bar and started drinking. He made advances toward a woman there and later followed her out to the parking lot. Now he is serving time in a correctional facility for sexual assault. He is also suffering within from the guilt of what he has done.

Sin leaves burdens in its wake. When we sin, we automatically have to deal with guilt. When we or anyone around us sins, there are hurtful consequences.

In your own experience with sin, what have you found more difficult to deal with: sin's guilt or sin's consequences?

Studying God's Word

Our sins burden us with guilt

Keith was a church member. He confided to the prison chaplain: "When I sobered up, I was horrified at what I had done. I have two daughters; if someone raped them, I'd want to kill him! What have I done?"

Can there be forgiveness for a sin as sordid as Keith's?

Read Psalm 51.

1. Take note of the heading to the psalm. What sin had David committed?
2. Pick out phrases from the psalm that show that David had a keen awareness of his sin and guilt.
3. Guilt is invisible. You can't measure it or weigh it, yet it is perhaps the heaviest of burdens. What is guilt?
4. In what ways does the burden of guilt manifest itself?
5. Where did David find hope in answer to his guilt? (Again, pick out some specific phrases from the psalm.)

His Word in My Life

Consider your relationship with your husband or wife or a close friend. What sins do you regularly forgive? What sins are more difficult to forgive? What sins do you feel that you could not forgive?

Refocus on the key point

After his crime and while in prison, Keith heard the gospel of Jesus. He acknowledged that the Lord is forgiving, yet it was hard for him to feel forgiven or to forgive himself. Then one Christmas he got a card in the mail. It was from the ladies' aid society of his church. That small gesture lifted a large load of guilt. Those ladies offered Keith the huge gift of forgiveness in the name of the One who came into our world to give forgiveness to us all.

One way we carry each other's burdens is by forgiving sins and offenses, just as God in Christ has forgiven us. Sinners whose souls are burdened with guilt need to be reassured of their redemption—not just from the pages of the Bible but from the mouths of Christian friends.

All sins come with consequences

A high school senior was angry and upset when his girlfriend broke up with him. He unleashed his emotions by punching the wall in his dormitory room. The wall was made of concrete blocks; he spent the next hours in an emergency room and the next weeks in a cast.

Isaac Newton's third law of motion states that for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. The law of sin demonstrates that for every sin there are numerous negative results that burden our lives.

Read Matthew 26:14-16,47-50; 27:1-5.

1. What led Judas to sin?
2. Judas tried to “unbetray” Jesus and give the money back. Why isn't it possible to undo a sin after it has been committed?
3. The consequences of one sin tend to beget other sins and still more consequences. Tell how this was so in the case of Judas. Can you give an example of how this happens today?

His Word in My Life

A woman at the office had “eyes” for Henry. He finally succumbed to her flirtations, and they had an affair. It was found out, and now he may lose his job and his wife.

If you were Henry's friend, how would you counsel him in regard to his guilt? in regard to dealing with the consequences of his sin?

Refocus on the key point

When we sin, we cannot avoid the pain and difficulty our sins cause. When others close to us sin, we are caught up in the swirl of chaos that sin carries with it. Sin tears through our lives like a tornado. May God help us—and may we help each other—pick up the pieces and rebuild on the solid foundation of faith and godliness.

Summary

Sin is never pretty. It clogs our spiritual arteries, making it hard for our hearts to feel alive and well. It leaves messes in our lives, like the aftermath of an explosion that scatters debris everywhere. Explain how Christ is the answer to both the guilt and the consequences of our sins.

Life with God

- Day 1: Read Psalm 103:8-12. Memorize the whole section or at least verse 12.
- Day 2: Read 2 Samuel chapter 12. Even though David was fully forgiven, what consequences did God say would come as a result of David's sin?
- Day 3: Read Job chapter 8. Was Bildad right to say that Job's children were penalized for their sin (verse 4)? Bildad did not offer comfort in times of trouble, but vengeful judgment.
- Day 4: Read Job chapters 9 and 10. Job was searching for answers just as much as his friends were. A pity they were no help to him!
- Day 5: Read Job chapter 11. Zophar goes so far as to say God is going easy on Job (verse 6) and that if Job only would confess his horrible sin, all trouble would disappear (verses 13-16).
- Day 6: Read Job chapters 12 through 14. Job labeled his friends' advice worthless (13:4). Counseling others in their burdens is of no help if we offer our own human thoughts and do not look for hope in God's Word.
- Day 7: Review what you memorized from Psalm 103:8-12. Say a prayer, praising God for forgiveness.