

ARM Prison Outreach International

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"Everyone Who Sins"

1 John 3:4-6

Editor's Note: This "MM" is the eighth email message of 2010 in a series that ARM is sending as an encouragement to preachers, chaplains, and Christian workers around the world. This issue is the 104th "MM" sent!!! All are archived -- just [click here](#) to see links to all messages sent since January of 2002.

This month's message is by Steve Shepherd, evangelist in Jonesboro, ARK; we are thankful he has allowed us to share it here. It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach and lead.

May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director

"Everyone Who Sins"

1 John 3:4-6

Daniel Webster, the famous American politician and orator, once spent a summer in New Hampshire, and every Lord's Day went to a little country church morning and evening. His niece asked him why he went there, when he paid little attention to far abler sermons in Washington.

He replied: "In Washington they preach to Daniel Webster, the statesman, but this man has been telling Daniel Webster, the sinner, of Jesus of Nazareth."

That's the right attitude to have. It's called humility. And God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. (1 Pet. 5:5)

Luke 18:13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'"

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

Sin: most either love it or leave it. God calls us to leave it behind with His help.

PROP.- What happens when a person sins? That is, what happens from God's perspective, since He is the one who counts most of all. Our text gives us God's mind on the subject of sin.

- 1- Everyone who sins breaks the law
- 2- Everyone who sins needs a sinless savior
- 3- Everyone who sins and keeps on sinning knows Him not

I. EVERYONE WHO SINS BREAKS THE LAW! -- 1 John 3:4

4 "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness."

ILL.- A poll of 5,000 students concluded that 46 percent of them would cheat on an important test. Thirty-six percent said they would cover for a friend who vandalized school property, while only 24 percent would tell the truth. Five percent said they would steal money from their parents if given the opportunity.

Truth be told, I bet it's worse today because this was an old poll taken nearly 20 years ago. Wow!

People break the law in many different ways. In fact, there are hundreds of ways to break the law and people do it. Sin also a matter of breaking the law. When we sin, however, we may not always break the law of the land but we will most certainly break God's law.

Again, this is why God gave man His law...so he would know that he had sinned against God. All sin is against the law of God.

The two great commandments that Jesus gave are what?

Matthew 22:36-40 36"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.'38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Any time we sin we will break one of these two great commandments and probably both.

ILL.- For example, Bernie Madoff broke both of these commandments by stealing billions of dollars from people. He broke God's law that says, "Thou shalt not steal." By stealing he showed that he did not love God nor did he love his fellow man. HE IS GUILTY ON BOTH COUNTS.

ILL.- Imagine all the obstacles a person might have to overcome if he were to walk from New York City to San Francisco. One man who accomplished this rare achievement mentioned a rather surprising difficulty when asked to tell of his biggest hurdle. He said that the toughest part of the trip wasn't traversing the steep slopes of the mountains or crossing hot, dry, barren stretches of desert. Instead, he said, "The thing that came the closest to defeating me was the sand in my shoes."

Sometimes it's the small things or perhaps the small sins that get to a person the most. It's those small, nagging sins that trip us up the most. And when we sin, we all have broken God's law.

ILL.- "What's wrong with the world?" a newspaper editorial once asked. G.K. Chesterton wrote in reply, "I am." ME TOO.

II. EVERYONE WHO SINS NEEDS A SINLESS SAVIOR! -- 1 John 3:5

5 "But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin." People who sin are in hot water with God.

Ezek. 18:4 "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Talk about hot water, this is far worse! Because we have sinned, we deserve to die! Most people don't think it's so bad to sin. In fact, many people brush off sin as no big deal.

ILL.- What is sin? Someone said it like this.
Man call is an accident, God calls it abomination.
Man calls it a defect, God calls it a disease.
Man calls it an error, God calls it an enmity.
Man calls it a liberty, God calls it lawlessness.
Man calls it a trifle, God calls it a tragedy.
Man calls it a mistake, God calls it a madness.
Man calls it a weakness, God calls it willfulness.

Many people like to call sin by other names, which makes it less harmful or damaging.

ILL.- Sidney J. Harris, American journalist, once said: Once we assuage our conscience by calling something a "necessary evil," it begins to look more and more

necessary and less and less evil.

ILL.- A man purchased a white mouse to use as food for his pet snake. He dropped the unsuspecting mouse into the snake's glass cage, where the snake was sleeping in a bed of sawdust. The tiny mouse had a serious problem on his hands. At any moment he could be swallowed alive. Obviously, the mouse needed to come up with a brilliant plan.

What did the terrified creature do? He quickly set up work covering the snake with sawdust chips until it was completely buried. With that, the mouse apparently thought he had solved his problem.

The solution, however, came from outside. The man took pity on the silly little mouse and removed him from the cage. No matter how hard we try to cover or deny our sinful nature, it's a fool's work. Sin will eventually awake from sleep and shake off its cover. Were it not for the saving grace of the Master's hand, sin would eat us alive.

Because we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, we need help! WE NEED A SAVIOR. There is no way that we can save ourselves or make up for our sin. There is no amount of good deeds that we can do to make up for our sins. We need a perfect Savior to pay the price.

Heb. 4:15 "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin."

II Cor. 5:21 "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

I Pet. 2:22 "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth."

I've met a few really good men in my time, but none that could pay the penalty for my sins. None that could and none that would, except Jesus.

I Pet. 2:24 "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed."

III. EVERYONE WHO SINS AND KEEPS ON SINNING KNOWS HIM NOT! -- 1 John 3:6

6 "No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him."

ILL.- When the teacher asked in what part of the world the most ignorant people were to be found, a small boy volunteered quickly, "In New York."

The teacher was amazed and asked the boy how he obtained his information. "Well," he replied, "the geography says that's where the population is the most dense."

There are definitely more ignorant people in New York than in most people because there are more people in New York!

ILL.- Will Rogers once said, "Everybody is ignorant, only on different subjects."

This is very true but there is one area of life where man can't afford to be ignorant and that's about God!

ILL.- Billionaire, Donald Trump was asked one time, "What about death?" the writer asked. "Don't you worry about dying?" Trump said, "No. I'm fatalistic and I protect myself as well as anybody can. I prepare for things."

(Fatalism is the view that we are powerless to do anything other than what we actually do. I guess, what will be, will be.)

This time, however, as Trump started walking up the stairs to have dinner with his family, he hesitated for a moment. "No," he said finally, "I don't believe in reincarnation, heaven or hell—but we go someplace. " Again a pause, "Do you know," he added, "I cannot, for the life of me, figure out where."

Eccl. 3:11 "He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom (or perhaps see) what God has done from beginning to end."

ILL.- Some years ago (1988), Orel Hersher was pitching for the Los Angeles Dodgers. They had just won the World Series. And Orel had been named the Most Valuable Player.

One of the TV shows about the series showed him in the dugout just before the 9th inning started. He was leaning against the wall. And his lips were moving.

So when he was a guest on the Tonight Show, Johnny Carson asked him what he had been saying. "I wasn't saying anything," Orel responded. "Well, then, tell us what you were doing." Finally Orel replied, "I was singing." Johnny said, "You were singing? I didn't know you were a singer. Come on, let's hear it!" And Orel said, "Nah. I don't want to." And the audience clapped and said, "Yeah! Let's hear it! Wooooh!!!!"

Finally, Orel Hershiser started to sing: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise him above Ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost!"

And Johnny Carson was speechless. Johnny Carson didn't get it. He didn't understand. Just like so many people.

People who continue to live in sin (whatever their sin is) know now. They know not the true and living God and they know not His truth. The older I grow, the more I want to know Him who created me and saved me. HOW ABOUT YOU?

CONCLUSION-----

- 1- Everyone who sins breaks the law
- 2- Everyone who sins needs a sinless savior
- 3- Everyone who sins and keeps on sinning knows not

Do you get the idea that sin is our problem? It's always been our problem. Sin separates us from God. Sin destroys people's lives, marriages, families, etc. And there is only one answer for sin: The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! He alone is our sin-bearer and Savior.

Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B

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In 2009, ARM donated almost 32,000 FREE Bible courses to prisoners -- 88 per day!**