

Christians Deal With Sin – Secret Sins

Text : Psalm 19 (esp. Vs. 12-13)

INTRODUCTION :

A. There is a famous proverb :

For the want of a nail the shoe was lost;
For the want of a shoe the horse was lost;
For the want of a horse the battle was lost;
For the failure of battle the kingdom was lost;—
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

B. This proverb originates from Shakespeare’s play entitled “King Richard III.”

1. It stems out of the decisive battle during the War of Roses which occurred in 1485 and changed the course of English history, The Battle of Bosworth Field.
 - a. King Richard III (one of England’s worse kings)
 - b. Being challenged by Henry Tudor, the Earl of Richmond
 - c. These were two branches of the same family fighting over the right to the throne.
2. The book “Fifty Famous People” by James Baldwin describes the story as follows :

THE HORSESHOE NAILS

A BLACKSMITH was shoeing a horse.

"Shoe him quickly, for the king wishes to ride him to battle," said the groom who had brought him.

"Do you think there will be a battle?" asked the blacksmith.

"Most certainly, and very soon, too," answered the man. "The king's enemies are even now advancing, and all are ready for the fight. Today will decide whether Richard or Henry shall be king of England."

The smith went on with his work. From a bar of iron he made four horseshoes. These he hammered and shaped and fitted to the horse's feet. Then he began to nail them on.

But after he had nailed on two shoes, he found that he had not nails enough for the other two.

"I have only six nails," he said, "and it will take a little time to hammer out ten more."

"Oh, well," said the groom, "won't six nails do? Put three in each shoe. I hear the trumpets now. King Richard will be impatient."

"Three nails in each shoe will hold them on," said the smith. "Yes, I think we may risk it."

So he quickly finished the shoeing, and the groom hurried to lead the horse to the king.

The battle had been raging for some time. King Richard rode hither and thither, cheering his men and fighting his foes. His enemy, Henry, who wished to be king, was pressing him hard.

Far away, at the other side of the field, King Richard saw his men falling back. Without his help they would soon be beaten. So he spurred his horse to ride to their aid.

He was hardly halfway across the stony field when one of the horse's shoes flew off. The horse was lamed on a rock. Then another shoe came off. The horse stumbled, and his rider was thrown heavily to the ground.

Before the king could rise, his frightened horse, although lame, had galloped away. The king looked, and saw that his soldiers were beaten, and that the battle was everywhere going against him.

He waved his sword in the air. He shouted, "A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse."

But there was no horse for him. His soldiers were intent on saving themselves. They could not give him any help.

The battle was lost. King Richard was lost. Henry became king of England.

3. Such is the origin of this often quoted proverb :

For the want of a nail the shoe was lost;
For the want of a shoe the horse was lost;
For the want of a horse the battle was lost;
For the failure of battle the kingdom was lost;—
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

C. I sighted this proverb because it relates to a life principle which directly applies to our walk with God.

1. In war, in business, and in life those who succeed pay attention to detail.
2. *"Take care of the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves."*
3. This same principle applies to success in the spiritual realm. ***Pursue sanctification***

I. All sin is serious

A. Any sin kills

1. **Rom. 6:23**
2. There is no distinction made between what men consider large or small sins.
3. Our Holy God separates Himself from all that is contaminated by sin.

B. All sin disrupts one's prayer life.

1. Those who feel guilty hesitate to approach God.
2. **Isa. 59: 1-2** ... Sin causes God to close His ears to the sinner's prayers.
3. **James 5: 16** ... It is ONLY the prayers of the righteous which accomplish much.

II. Whether large or small secret sins are more deadly than many others.**A. Secret sins tend to lead one to commit more sins.**

1. Sins that no one else knows about may appear to have had no adverse consequences.
 - a. No scorn or social pressure to change.
 - b. No punishment
2. When there is no fear of repercussions, there is less incentive not to reoffend.

ILL. - *Man is in a hurry so he doesn't stop completely at the stop streets. Nothing happens so it becomes a habit, but he slows a little less each time. Eventually he is hardly slowing down and causes a serious collision.*
3. We do this same thing when we think there has been no consequence to our sin.

B. Secret sins tend to become habit forming, sometimes even addictive.

1. The first time the aforementioned man went through the stop-signs he was cautious.
2. After committing the same sin many times one's conscience becomes callused to it.
 - a. He feels no guilt.
 - b. He accepts it as normal behavior. (*Bad language, Petty theft, Pornography*)

C. Secret sins can rob the Christian of his inner peace.

1. Secret sins pop unbidden into memory, sometimes at embarrassing times.
2. Though unknown to others, secret sins can cause ongoing guilt.

ILL.- *Setting by the death bed of an elderly Christian he wanted prayer regarding a sin that he had been committing secretly for most of his life. He said he was addicted to pornography and still had not been able to overcome it. As he faced death his guilt over this secret sin caused him to fear for his salvation.*

D. Secret sins may cause many to be lost. (*Secret sins are seldom as secret as we think.*)

1. People often don't feel compelled to confess secret sins to God. (*callused conscience*)
2. People often think they have gotten away with a sin that others don't know about.
3. God knows EVERY sin we have ever committed. (*Water melon seed illustration*)
 - a. **Psa. 90: 8** - **You have placed our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your presence.**

- b. **Eccl. 12:14** - For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.

III. Five practical ways to overcome secret sins.

A. 1st .. Develop a more accurate view of God. **He is omniscient.**

1. God knows everything and forgets nothing.
 - a. Past, present, or future ... **all** time is **NOW** with God.
 - b. He does not forget with the passing of time because for Him time does not pass.
2. Before creation God knew every deed you would do and every thought you'd think.

Psa. 139: 2- You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
You understand my thought from afar.

4- Even before there is a word on my tongue,
Behold, O Lord, You know it all.

12- Even the darkness is not dark to You, And the night is as
bright as the day. Darkness and light are alike to You.
3. **Gen. 4:8** ... Cain waited until he had Abel alone in the field, but God knew his sin.
ILL - We are like small children who cover their eyes and think others can't see them.

B. 2nd .. Look at all sin with grief. **God hates sin and is sorrowed by it.**

1. Too often in our society we allow ourselves to be entertained by the sins of others.

Rom. 1:32- and although they know the ordinance of God, that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but also give hearty approval to those who practice them. (e.g. - *immoral TV*)
2. Christians are expected to hate any vestiges of sin.
 - a. **Jude 22-23** And have mercy on some, who are doubting; save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh. (cf - **II Chron. 19:2**)
 - b. **Amos 5: 15-** Hate evil, love good, And establish justice in the gate!
3. Living in the presence of sin causes us to become desensitized to it.
ILL – A barn smells awful to a city slicker, but the farmer hardly notices the smells.

C. 3rd .. Do not entertain the desire to sin. **One can't stop birds from flying over, but never lets them nest in his hair.**

1. Resisting temptation requires a goodly amount of self-discipline.

I Cor. 9: 27- I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.
2. One never reaches the point that he can relax his guard. (*Satan never relaxes.*)
I Cor. 9: 27- Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

3. All sin begins in the mind so we must supplant evil desires with good thoughts.
 - a. **James 1: 14-** Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.
 - b. We must stay in control of our thoughts. (*Make conscious decisions.*)
Col. 3: 2- Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.
 - c. We are given guidelines for the channels we are to keep our mind tuned to.
Phil. 4: 8- Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

D. 4th .. Stay in close communication with God. Communication is a two way st.

1. Any temptation we are willing to discuss with God is 90% overcome already.
2. The more we are filled with the word of God, the less room there is for worldliness.
Psa. 119: 11- Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.

E. 5th .. Establish a system of accountability.

1. Secret sins become much less difficult to control when they are no longer a secret.
2. Find a prayer partner with whom you can confess your temptations and pray together
 - a. This is much more effective if done between spiritual peers than in the assembly.
 - b. **James 5: 16-** Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

CONCLUSION :

A. Christians tend to prematurely declare “Mission Accomplished” when we have overcome the “big sins” which are more obvious and visible.

1. Most Christians can readily see that they are living a better life than the world.
2. Like the Pharisees, the tendency is to begin feeling pretty good about ourselves.
3. When we are no longer alert Satan catches us in his snare and pounces like a lion.

B. We must be constantly aware of the little sins that we don’t notice. (*sanctification*)

1. Little things can be very dangerous.
 - a. Termites destroy more houses every year than tornados.
 - b. Cumulatively mosquitoes drink more blood every year than do lions.
 - c. Little sins corrupt sanctification.

2. The advice that Solomon gave to lovers is good advice for those who love God.
Song Of Solomon 2: 15- Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards, while our vineyards are in blossom.
4. The one who pays attention to the little things will not be caught by the big ones.

C. Let us all take the necessary steps to deal with our small hidden sins.

1. Understand that no sin escapes God's view or His justice.
2. Develop a hatred for sin even as God hates it. (*Grieve over it, not be entertained.*)
3. Keep thoughts of sin out of our minds.
4. Stay in close communication with God.
5. Establish accountability

INVITATION :

Jesus is the way to deal with your sin.

He wants to be your savior.

Lesson Text :**Psalms 19: 1-14**

1 The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. **2** Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. **3** There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. **4** Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun, **5** Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; It rejoices as a strong man to run his course. **6** Its rising is from one end of the heavens, And its circuit to the other end of them; And there is nothing hidden from its heat.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. **8** The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. **9** The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. **10** They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. **11** Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; In keeping them there is great reward. **12** Who can discern *his* errors? Acquit me of hidden *faults*. **13** Also keep back Your servant from presumptuous *sins*; Let them not rule over me; Then I will be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression. **14** Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.