

THE MISINTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF SIN

GOLDEN TEXT

“Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin”. (Romans 3:20)

USEFUL PRACTICE

Adam's sin ruined all mankind. However, Jesus Christ can effectually regenerate the sinner.

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 3:9-20

9 What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin.

10 As it is written “There is no one righteous, not even one;
11 there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God.
12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one.”

13 “Their throats are open graves; their tongues practice deceit.”
“The poison of vipers is on their lips.”

14 “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.”

15 “Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 ruin and misery mark their ways,

17 and the way of peace they do not know.”

18 “There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

I) To expose the biblical teaching of the sinful nature;

II) To point out modern theologies that derive from the misinterpretation of the biblical doctrine of sin;

III) To show the consequences of treating sin as normal.

INTRODUCTION

The Fall in Eden transmitted to mankind the inclination of the human heart to error. Therefore, regeneration is the only possible means of undoing the consequences of sin in which human nature can only be transformed by the work of Christ (Titus 3:5,6). However, under the influence of modern theologies, the doctrine of sin has been distorted and weakened. This process opened the door to the normalization of sin in many so-called Christian places. In this lesson, we will study the danger of these theologies to Christian orthodoxy.

I - THE BIBLICAL TEACHING OF THE SINFUL NATURE

1. Definition of Sin. Among the terms for “sin”, we highlight the Hebrew noun *chata'*, whose root means “to miss the mark” (Gen 4.7); and its Greek correspondent *hamartia*, which has a connotation of “moral error” (2 Pet 2:13, 14). Thus, the Bible defines “sin” as the transgression of God's Law (1 John 3:4). The word encompasses not just missing the mark, but deliberately hitting the wrong target. It is rebellion and disobedience against God and His Word (1 Sam. 15:22, 23). Furthermore, sin distances man from God, making him sin against his neighbor (1 John 1:6, 7) and by failing to do good (James 4:17). Therefore, sin is the condition of the unregenerate

man and it can only be removed through the New Birth (John 3:3-7). This reconciliation of man with God is only possible in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 5:19).

2. The universality of Sin. The human being was created in a state of innocence, without sin, perfect (Eccl. 7:29) and endowed with free will (Gen. 2:16, 17). However, the first man chose to disobey God and his Fall corrupted all mankind (Gen. 3:9-19). Adam's sin was passed on to the entire human race (Rom. 5:12). Thus, since the Fall, all human beings are born in sin (Ps. 51:5). Therefore, sin is not passed on merely by force of bad example, but it is an inherent evil in human nature (Rom. 7:14-24). As a result, every human being is under the bondage of sin and the condemnation of death (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). Though corrupted by sin, human nature can be effectively regenerated through faith in Christ (Rom. 3:24; 2 Cor. 5:17).

3. Total Corruption. It is the state of mental, moral and spiritual corruption of human nature (Rom. 3:10-18). In this respect, the inclination to do wrong is the result of sin (Gen. 6:5; Rom. 5:19). Because of the Fall, all areas of our being were corrupted. This corruption prevents man from taking the lead on the process of regeneration (Rom. 8:7, 8). He can only be freed from sin after being convicted by the Spirit (John 16:8). Without this divine help, no one can be transformed (Titus 3:5), that is, free will needs to be divinely restored (Romans 2:4). Only through grace does man receive the ability to believe, repent and be saved (Rom. 3:24, 25). Thus, deliverance from sin does not come from any human effort, but it is freely and divinely offered (6:23; Eph. 2:8, 9).

II - MODERN THEOLOGIES

1. Theology of social sin. The thesis of social sin dates back to the Catholic councils of Medellin (1968, Colombia) and Puebla (1979, Mexico). This thesis argues that sin is something that is constructed through oppressive structures, such as poverty, injustice and inequality. In this way, the redemption of sin is not restricted to the spiritual aspect, it is necessary to deal with social issues. Sin ceases to be treated at the moral level and gets to be considered at the economic and social level. The shift in emphasis from original sin (human nature) to social sin (structural) weakens the sinner's moral responsibility. So, it stops emphasizing the cause to explore the symptoms (Matt. 23:27, 28). Since then, resolving the questions of the social order has been viewed as a solution to the problem of sin. Of course, this is a misinterpretation of the biblical teaching of sin.

2. Liberation theology. Liberation theology has an affinity to the socialist ideas of Karl Marx. This theory seeks to "liberate" the oppressed from the

oppressive structures of society. It was born in the 1970s with Gustavo Gutiérrez (Peru) and Leonardo Boff (Brazil). For them, theological study should not be centered on biblical doctrines to free man from sin, but on social outcry to free man from social, economic and cultural injustice. From this impulse emerge the emancipatory theologies based on gender (transsexuality), sexuality (homosexuality) and race. One of its strands is the Integral Mission Theology (IMT). The great impact of these influences is that the Christian faith is reduced to socialist and Marxist political militancy. The social and progressive agendas are disguised under the guise of the Gospel, put above the moral values of the Kingdom of God. So, the Gospel is transformed into nonconformity, criticism and welfare programs (1 Cor. 15:19; Phil. 3:18-20).

3. Theological liberalism. After the Protestant Reformation (1517), theological liberalism flourished, in which reason was placed above divine revelation. As a result, the inspiration, inerrancy, and infallibility of Scripture are called into question; miracles and the supernatural are considered mythological; the doctrines of faith are reinterpreted and given new meanings. The message of salvation, repentance, confession of sins and change of character is replaced with a progressive vision that emphasizes social transformation through the paradigm of Marxism. Thus, sin is treated as unimportant, religious ecumenism is propagated and every spiritual experience is considered valid. The ideology of liberal theology is opposed to the old biblical doctrines that are based on the revelation of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 4:3).

III - THE NORMALIZATION OF SIN

1. Ethical and moral crisis.

In general terms, the values that regulate a person's conduct are called ethics (1 Pet. 1:15) and the practice of this conduct is called morality. In this conception, obedience to biblical principles reflects the character of a Christian (Rom. 12:2). However, the misinterpreted and relativized concept of sin results in deviation and character flaw (2 Tim 3:5). In this way, society ceases to be ethically sound and becomes morally maladjusted (Hab. 1:4). From this crisis of integrity, actions incompatible with biblical faith erupt (Rom. 2:21, 22). Progressive themes violate biblical ethics and morals and become normalized, such as: sexual immorality, abortion and the use of illicit drugs (1 Sam. 2:6; Rom. 1:27; 1 Cor. 6:15,19).

2. Sexual immorality. The misinterpretation of the doctrine of sin favors the advancement of sexual immorality (Rom. 1:24). In defense of freedom of decision about the body, premarital and extramarital sex becomes trivial, homosexuality is normalized (Rom. 1:26, 27) and the doctrine of chastity is viewed as oppressive (Rom. 6:12). In this regard, the slackening of morals, the teaching of gender ideology, and the eroticization of childhood promote lust and licentiousness. Sin is tolerated, the family is deconstructed, and the doctrine of holiness is neglected (Heb. 13:4).

3. The desecration of life. The Scriptures teach that human life is sacred because it has a divine origin (Gen. 1:27). Therefore, life is inviolable and should be valued (2 Pet. 1:3). The human body must be cared for, fed, and preserved (Eph. 5:29). However, the normalization of sin fosters ideologies that despise sacredness and human dignity. Unconditional autonomy over one's own body is propagated without the due ethical and moral limitations. The slogan "my body, my rules" claims the false right of the person to use drugs, prostitute themselves, have an abortion, commit suicide and euthanasia. Thus, the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, is profaned (1 Cor. 6:19). The creature purposefully affronts the will of the Creator (Rom. 1:25).

CONCLUSION

The relativization of sin, which restricts it to the solution of social agendas to the detriment of morality, and, in turn, moral exclusivism, to the detriment of social causes, do not portray the Christian faith as well. Although the Church is neither apolitical nor insensitive to social inequalities, the primary evil to be fought is the sin inherent in human nature. Once regenerated by faith in Christ, the believer rejects the injustices against his neighbor (Rom. 1:18; 1 Cor. 13:6). The active Church is the one that still fight on earth against the flesh, the world, the Devil, sin and death (Eph. 6:12).