

Sinning with Impunity

The lovely D and I sometimes like to watch crime shows- either dramas or fact-based documentaries. We can usually stand only a few at a time before they get depressing. However, they (especially the factual ones) provide a measure of enlightenment to how “the other half” of humanity lives. By “other half” I mean those people who seemingly have no regard for the even the basic moralities of “right” and “wrong,” or at least that they do not manifest such in their conduct.

We were watching one of these types of programs recently and it entailed how a man shot and killed three people because he said one of them had stolen a motor (engine) from his truck- the program never really clarified whether or not such was actually true. Apparently, the other two victims simply tried to come to the aid of their friend once the altercation commenced. Three young men lost their lives just trying to fish at a local (Florida) lake. But aside from the overall tragedy, what really piqued our attention was that the perpetrator had over 200 FELONY CONVICTIONS on his record dating all the way back to his adolescent years!

We were shocked, and couldn't help but wonder how many other people (besides his last three victims!) could have been spared from this man if he had been either incarcerated for life or executed after... I don't know, pick a number, three, ten, or a dozen such convictions? He obviously had no respect for the law, right and wrong, or anyone beside himself to amass such a record. Why hadn't “the legal system” stopped him sooner? But then I got to thinking....

“The soul who sins shall die,” Ezk.18:4b; *“For the wages of sin is death,”* Rom.6:23a. Since *sin*, even a *single sin*, makes one *worthy of death*, how many times have you or I deserved to die? Of course a distinction must be made between “spiritual” and “physical” death, but the question remains. Add this to it: What if we really understood this principle? What if we really grasped the concept that each sin we commit makes us worthy of a “death penalty”? Go back to our initial case for a moment. Suppose that every felony carried a death penalty upon conviction. Would knowing such have been a deterrent for this fellow? I'm not advocating for the death penalty for a felony conviction, but I am suggesting that we stop and think before we decide to commit sin. Each sin we commit carries a “death penalty.” Such should surely be a deterrent FOR US.

Think of it another way for a moment. Each sin we decide to commit caused Jesus to die on the cross in order to make propitiation/atonement for it, 1Pet.2:24. His crucifixion was and is, therefore, the penalty price He paid for OUR sin(s). When contemplating sin, ask yourself, “Is this sin worth to me the price He paid for it?”

Thanks be to God for His immeasurable gift! We looked earlier at the first part of Rom.6:23, but now note the rest of the verse, *“For the wages of sin is death, **but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”* Add to it Paul's admonition to the Corinthians, *“Become sober-minded as you ought and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame,”* 1Cor.15:34. Perhaps if we really understood that each and every one of our sins: a) deserves the “death penalty;” and, b) that Jesus' crucifixion was/is the “price paid” for them, such would be deterrent for us. Otherwise, we just go on sinning with impunity... kind of like the 200+ felony

conviction man. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at southportcofc.org)