

Sins of Ignorance vs. other sins

Scripture's strong warning to take sin seriously

by Philip Shields

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NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted.

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Summary: We examine many scriptures showing God regards sins of knowledge (knowing what we're doing is wrong) far more seriously than sins of ignorance, or unintentional sins. A good Pre-Passover examination. We discuss: how often in fact we sin with full knowledge of what we're doing; how to put the real leaven of sin out of our lives. Really overcoming sin, really changing. "Casual sin", sins done in defiance. We hope Passover means more after this message.

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I believe as we enter the final weeks before Passover, you'll find this topic very appropriate, as we examine ourselves, to see if we are truly in the faith or not. Ezekiel 33:32-33 says that so often God's children go to Sabbath services to hear a speaker and to all too many it's just like hearing a pleasant instrument or a pretty song, but the message causes little change. "That was a good sermon", we say, while we stay the same. I've certainly been like that, but don't want to be that way. I'm hoping this sermon really makes everyone who hears it, including me, stop and think.

Greetings children of the Eternal God Yahweh, the One who says *He* is "*holy, holy, holy*" (Isa.6:1-3). This is your brother Philip Shields reminding us that our Father calls you and me to also be, in Him, "holy, for – or because - *He* is holy" (1 Pet. 1:15-16). Remember it is only by His indwelling Holy Spirit that we can claim any holiness. Yahweh alone, and everything He touches - is holy. There's nothing we can do apart from His presence, or His Spirit, which would impart holiness to us.

But I think we take sin too lightly. We too easily indulge ourselves with unholy things of this world. Twenty-fourty or more years after our baptism, too many of us still aren't witnessing very effectively to the changing power of God's Spirit, or to the resurrection of our Master. We've made the easier physical changes initially (Christmas, keeping Sabbath, etc.), but now how about the changing of what we ARE, who we are? Do you really feel ready to stand before your King and Judge and say you used His Spirit powerfully to cleanse and change yourself and to overcome sin – or will we have to admit we've remained too casual about sin? That's what we're talking about today.

Frankly, it's not easy, it's hard - - to be living as we should, as children of our Holy Father, in this evil world we live in. Temptations come at us from every side and if we resist sin, we're ridiculed as wackos. We *don't* consistently apply the Bible teachings we claim to believe – not because we mean to be hypocrites, but because we are flesh and the flesh is weak. When we fail, the enemies of holiness mock us as being no better than anyone else.

Why we Need this Message

Yahweh says our sins separate us from Him (Isa. 59:2) and keep all the good things He would love to shower down on us (Jer. 5:25). He hates sin. His true children want nothing to do with sin either. if we're honest with ourselves, many of us were called out of "Babylon" 20-30-40 years ago, yet many of us still wrestle with the same sins and weaknesses we had 20 to 40 years ago. Perhaps we

think to ourselves, “I can always repent later”, while we settle down to get careless with sin, to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a moment, to not resist temptation as we should. All this applies to me too.

Why do we need to hear this topic?

- The eternal rewards will go to the overcomers. Over and over, 5 of the 7 churches at the end are told to repent and all are told to overcome. For example: Rev. 2:7, 11; Rev. 3:12, 21
- Those who practice sin – such as immorality, using God’s name in vain – will NOT be in the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:21). We can’t be doing sinful things as a way of life anymore!
- The world scene is heating up big time. You want to escape the coming time of greatest trouble? We’re told to pray we be counted worthy to escape (Luke 21:36). People who sin lightly, casually – can hardly be given high probability of being considered “worthy”.
- Those who will return with Messiah are those who are the called, chosen AND faithful (Rev. 17:14). Are we being faithful when we casually sin?

There are more reasons. I don’t want to hear “I never knew you”. I want to be his temple. I want Father to be pleased with me and all of us, His children. I want to be growing in obedience. I want to have a relationship of love with my Husband, Jesus Christ – or Yeshua the Messiah. So sin has to go! I want to love Him more today than yesterday. I want to obey more this year than last year.

I hope by the time we finish today, you will see more clearly than ever how Scripture makes a big difference between sin done in ignorance, or unintentionally – and sin that is done with full awareness. It’s those sins with full awareness that we’ve just got to wake up to and overcome!

Sins done in Ignorance – vs. Casual or blatant sins we know are sins

Do you remember what Yeshua said as He was being tortured on the stake on Calvary?
“Father, forgive them, *for they know not what they do.*” (Luke 23:34)

Peter confirmed that in a sermon in Acts 3:17-19, in discussing the death of Jesus the Christ.

Acts 3:17

"Yet now, brethren, I know you did it [killed him] in ignorance, as did also your rulers."

1 Corinthians 2:8 -- PAUL writes:

"Had they known [what they were doing], they would not have crucified the Lord of glory".

So don’t be too tough on the Jews of Yeshua’s day. Scripture is clear, had they known, *they would not have done it.* What if they *had* understood exactly what they were doing? What about you and me?

How many times – when we sin – can we honestly say, “I did it ignorantly. I didn’t know what I was doing”?

Scripture clearly says Father will be much tougher in His discipline when we do wrong things knowing it's wrong vs. the sins that can catch us unawares. But after 20-40+ years "in the church", how often can we now say we didn't know that a particular wrong was a sin?

Teachers, priests, ministers and rulers are held to a tougher standard. Yeshua Himself says at one point that some are guilty of "the greater sin" (John 19:11). God calls sins of premeditation, of knowledge, to be the "greater sin".

Please be turning to John 9. As you do, don't forget that we still have a wonderfully forgiving Savior and Father who wants to reconcile us and who can be pleased with His family. I'm just trying to say we should grow into considering sin far more seriously than I think we often do. John 9 is about what Yeshua says to people who claimed to "see", after He heals the man who had been born blind:

John 9:35-41

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, "Do you believe in the Son of God?"

36 He answered and said, "Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?"

37 And Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you."

38 Then he said, "Lord, I believe!" And he worshiped Him.

39 And Jesus said, "For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind."

40 Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, "Are we blind also?"

41 **Jesus said to them, "*If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, 'We see.' Therefore your sin remains.*"**

Have you thought about what He's saying here? How often have I heard opening/closing prayer men pray in church, "Thank you, Father, for opening our eyes and understanding to your truth..." If we really have had our eyes opened, the responsibility we bear is much greater now when we sin. When we understand what we're doing is wrong – and still do it – we're on very thin ice. We'll still be forgiven, as I'll show you, but when we do that, our judgment is going to be very tough. I hope this is making us think and is waking us up. I hope this sermon literally – understand where I'm coming from as I say this – "scares the hell out of you".

I'm hoping that as we come up to Passover this year, as I've spoke on in previous years, let our main focus be on putting sin out of our lives even more than just putting physical leaven out of our houses.

We do deleaven physically before Passover too, so don't misunderstand me. But we should spend more time on deleavening spiritually. The fact is, it's nigh to impossible to totally deleaven, as there are even leaven spores *in the air*, as anyone who has ever made sour dough understands. And in the end, our corruptibility is finally terminated when this corruption puts on incorruption at the resurrection, when we shall be like Him and see Him as He is (1 John 3:2). That's when we become fully incorruptible, but even now, we must be changing, growing more and more into the image of God's anointed Son, and coming together as the holy House of God – "until Christ is formed in you" (Gal. 4:19).

When Israel came out of Egypt, they were told that if anyone ate anything leavened during the Days of Unleavened Bread, he/she would be cut off from Israel (Ex. 12:19-20). What should that tell us? We've been told to put sin out of our lives, pictured by putting leaven out of our houses. We've

heard that for 30-40 years now, but are we? We do the easy physical deleavening tasks – but how are we doing on the real meaning of the exercise: to put actual sin out of our lives? We can't cohabit with ongoing sin being tolerated in our lives. We have to quit sinning- - especially the sins we know to be sins. Sin that is part of our old personality has to go too: like gossiping, being stubborn, selfish, lustful, proud or self-centered. Careless sin. Or worse yet, intentional sin. It's all got to go. Again, I'm in the same boat. I need this sermon as badly as any of you might. How about the sin of the way we're mistreating the body of Christ – the brethren "over there" – whom we gossip about and have nothing to do with?

What I'm saying is this: We're so careful to toss out any leaven in the house while we are tolerant of spiritual leaven in our spiritual house. That has to change. We have to change. We use the word "change" – and doesn't that remind you of taking off the filthy garments and changing into the wedding garments? I hope you'll take this message seriously and prayerfully.

"But I thought I don't have to worry about anything- - since God imputes His righteousness"?

This sermon does not negate the two-part sermons I recently gave on "Living in Christ's Righteousness", and how our Father imputes His Son's righteousness to us in faith. In that sermon, I pointed out we can never be righteous enough on our own merits to qualify for the kingdom of God. One has qualified, and He qualified perfectly. If you didn't hear the sermons, please do. I consider those 2 sermons central to understanding scripture, and central to the messages of LightontheRock.

HE is our righteousness. We are to seek the Kingdom of God and *its* righteousness. I gave scripture after scripture that that imputing of His goodness to us is part of the picture of grace that we don't hear as much about. But does that mean – as some teach – that nothing else matters? Does it mean we can remain in sinful lives and just relax in His righteousness? NO!

We are now *indebted* to Him (Rom. 8:12-13) to let Him live in us. Remember in those sermons I discussed witnessing to His resurrection by letting people see that Yeshua lives today, this time in His people. The new you is His creation. There is but one Creator. HE is the creator of the new creation. But as good clay in the Potter's hand, we must let him mold us into something different than just the lump of mire we once were. He wants to mold us into a holy vessel for holy use.

We can't claim His righteousness and stay the way we are! Before the days of Unleavened Bread, what did Yeshua do? He helped clean and "deleaven" His father's house. He cast out the cheating money changers. We are now His house and when He comes inside of us, He wants to clean house and live His perfect way.

But are we letting him? Remember we can try to change ourselves, or we can get ourselves out of the way and let HIM do His new creative work in us. Don't quote Phil. 2:12, about working out your own salvation, without quoting verse 13 – "for it is GOD who works in you, both to will and to do".

We keep trying to do it ourselves and 20-30-40 years later, not much has changed. Why? Because we're going about it all the wrong way. The wrong way is trying to do it all ourselves. That will always end in failure. And failure to really change is what we're witnessing in too many lives.

So this sermon is about taking sin much, much more seriously than we do. A future sermon will go into much more of the how we let the Savior save us!

But note that we must change. We must let HIM change us. That involves the relationship with Him. **ROM. 8:12-13** says we are debtors to change our lives. If we don't put the flesh down, "we will die; but if by the Spirit we kill the deeds of the flesh, we will live". That's what it says. Jesus Himself said that if we don't obey Him, we can be doing all kinds of marvelous things in His name, "for" Him, but He'll still say, "I never knew you" (Matthew 7:21-23). John says if we claim to know Him but don't live and walk as He walked, we are liars (1 John 2:2-6). Are we hearing our Father speaking to us?

So again, it's HIS righteousness in us which saves us, but please hear this: overcoming, changing, becoming His new creation proves He is living anew in us. CONVERSION – which means changing -- is **proof** His grace is working. Good works, changing – are proofs HIS salvation, HIS life, is taking hold in OUR lives.

If it were a crime to be a devout Christian, would there be tons of evidence to convict us? Someday it may well be a crime to be a follower of Yeshua.

More on the Unintentional Sins of Ignorance

I'm going to ask you to take more time privately to carefully read the verses I will have here in Leviticus 4 and 5, which are all about the sin offering, to atone for sin. But as you read it, I want you to notice the references to "sins of ignorance" or "Unintentional sin" all the way through. Notice the kind of sin this particular "sin offering" is covering! And after each section, it goes on to say something like "So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him." But the context will always be, in Lev. 4-5, a sin of ignorance.

Leviticus 4:1-2

Now the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, saying: '**If a person sins unintentionally** against any of the commandments of the Lord in anything which ought not to be done, and does any of them, ...

Leviticus 4:13-14

13 'Now **if the whole congregation of Israel sins unintentionally**, and the thing is hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done something against any of the commandments of the Lord in anything which should not be done, and are guilty; 14 *when the sin which they have committed becomes known*, then the assembly shall offer a young bull for the sin, and bring it before the tabernacle of meeting.

Leviticus 4:22-23

22 'When **a ruler has sinned, and done something unintentionally** against any of the commandments of the Lord his God in anything which should not be done, and is guilty, 23 *or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge....*" [Wow! Hearing this?]

Lev 4:27-28

27 '**If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally** by doing something against any of the commandments of the Lord in anything which ought not to be done, and is guilty, 28

or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge, then he shall bring as his offering a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed.

Leviticus 5:14-15, 17-19

14 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 15 "If a person commits a trespass, **and sins unintentionally in regard to the holy things** of the Lord, then he shall bring to the Lord as his trespass offering a ram without blemish

[Jump now to verse 17]

17 "If a person sins, and commits any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the commandments of the Lord, **though he does not know it**, yet he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity. 18 And he shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish from the flock, with your valuation, as a trespass offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him regarding his ignorance in which he erred and did not know it, and it shall be forgiven him. 19 It is a trespass offering; he has certainly trespassed against the Lord."

Paul repeats all this in a summary in Hebrews 9:6-10, talking about the high priest going into the Holy of Holies on behalf of the people once a year. I'll quote **Hebrews 9:7**:

7 "But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he **offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance;**"

Wow, are you catching the drift here? I'm not saying that if your sin was done with full awareness that you're not going to be forgiven. I am saying: God takes that more seriously. Much more seriously. And it also should be showing us how hard it is to really get rid of sin, and how much we need the righteousness of God imputed to us.

These comments are repeated in Numbers 15:22-29, if you care to read up on this some more later. I'll just read the last 2 verses:

Numbers 15:28-29

"So the priest shall make atonement for the person who sins *unintentionally*, when he sins unintentionally before the Lord, to make atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him. 29 **You shall have one law for him who sins unintentionally**, for him who is native-born among the children of Israel and for the stranger who dwells among them."

I've already mentioned Jesus saying on the cross, "Father forgive them for they KNOW NOT what they do." Be turning to 1 Tim. 1:12-16. Look at what Paul said about himself, after he was called while on the way to persecute, arrest and possibly torture the new Christians. But also be aware of the fact that devout orthodox Jews – the Pharisees—of his day were given excuses for harshly punishing those who deviated from the faith, i.e., the Christians.

1 Timothy 1:12-14

12 And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, 13 although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; **but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief**. 14 And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

So the terrible things he did were done ignorantly.
Let's read a few more:

In Acts 17:29-31, on Mars Hill in Athens, Paul says – v. 30 - 30 **Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.**

Then even as we sin, at least I hope we're at the point where we hate what we're doing. Paul said, "that which I hate, I do." (Rom. 7:15). Those were not defiant sins, but sins of weakness.

When we sin, can we say we are hating what we are doing as we do it? We're weak, in the flesh, but we should hate the sin and offer no excuse for sin. But how fiercely are we fighting sin? Or are we just caving in? *When does refusing to resist sin fiercely, with prayer and fasting if need be, cross the line into defiance?* I wouldn't want to gamble on that answer.

Be turning now to Hebrews 10:19 please. The High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies only after first redeeming or cleansing himself through the blood of bulls and sacrifices. *He entered the holy place with blood on his hands so to speak.*

Today we are able to enter the true heavenly Holy of Holies boldly, but don't forget, we enter also with blood on our hands – but this time it is not with the blood of bulls, but the blood of Yeshua. We're forgiven, we're loved, we're accepted, we're redeemed – all yes – but don't forget how we are able to come before the throne of Grace, and to take that very, very seriously. It took bloodshed – the innocent blood of our big brother Yeshua -- to come to the point where we can come cleansed and forgiven before our Holy Father. Should we not be much more aware of this?

Hebrews 10:19-31

19 Therefore, brethren, **having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus**, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

26 For if we sin willfully [defiantly] after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy **who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?** 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

As we come to this Passover, let's not take sin so casually and think, "Oh well, I'll just repent afterwards and all will be well." Careful. Careful. You're on very, very thin ice thinking like that.

But on the other hand, I don't want any of you thinking you've committed the "unpardonable sin" or that you can't be forgiven. That is not my goal at all. I'm just wanting us to wake up, to—as

Scripture puts it – “watch your garments”, to stay awake, to flee temptation, fight sin more fiercely, resist evil more and get over this feeling I have that too many of us take sin far too casually.

Teachers bear more responsibility

Turn now to James 3 please. Do you really want to be a minister or teacher? Frankly James 3:1 scares the pants off me. And it should!

James 3:1

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we [teachers of the Word] shall receive a stricter judgment.”

Remember how fierce Jesus was towards the scribes and Pharisees, largely because they were teachers. He said, “for a pretense you make long prayers, and you shall receive the stricter condemnation.” (Matthew 23:14)

Teachers and ministers should understand sin and the Word of God much more. You always learn more by preparing a topic than by hearing a topic someone else is giving. So we will be held to a higher and tougher standard too. The stewards of the word will be treated much more strictly.

Luke 12:47-48

47 “And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with *few*. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”

Scripture is clear. If we *understand* the evil we are doing, our judgment will be much more severe than being caught up in a sin unintentionally. When we see what we’re doing, it borders on what is called “Sin of presumption” or “Sin of defiance” – and Almighty God sees that in very different light. I’m just saying, brethren, for those of us who have been around a long time, it’s time. It’s time to clean up, time to put sin out of our lives even as we go about deleavening prior to Passover.

Those of you who have been learning The Way for some years now – see what warning is given to all of us in 2 Peter 2.

2 Peter 2:19-22

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage. 20 For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. 21 **For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.** 22 But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: “A dog returns to his own vomit,” and, “a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.”

Hebrews 6:4-6

4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

I think the ASB version did a good job on Psalm 19. We want to avoid willful sins.

Psalm 19:12-13 ASB

“Who perceives his *unintentional* sins? Cleanse me from my hidden [secret] faults.

13 Moreover, keep Your servant from *willful [NKJV: Presumptuous] sins*;
do not let them rule over me. Then I will be innocent, and cleansed *from blatant rebellion*.”

Let's look now at a couple examples of people who knew what they were doing, but repented bitterly and were forgiven and restored. I want you hear me saying this: yes, your sins can be forgiven and will be forgiven if you repent. But brethren, we must repent and put sin out. Remember the end time era of Laodicea was called to repent, as were most of the 7 churches of Revelation 2-3.

Peter's DENIAL

Do you remember when Peter denied the Messiah? Did he not realize what he was doing? Turn please to Luke 22:59. After the 3rd time, it says Peter and Jesus locked eyes for a second.

Luke 22:59-62

59 Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean."

60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!"

Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 **And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.** Then Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 62 So **Peter went out and wept bitterly.**

Was Peter unaware he was denying His King? Of course he knew – but at the moment, he was scared and the flesh was weak. But what happened? He denied his Master 3x, and he was given three times to confirm his love and allegiance, but it could not have been much fun.

Peter wept bitterly, it says in Luke 22. And after Yeshua and Peter met up again after a fruitless fishing trip in John 21, our King wasn't exactly easy on Peter. Three times had had to confess, after being asked, “Peter, do you *agape* me – do you love me with a godly undying love?” – and three times, in front of his mates and friends, Peter had to cry out, “Lord, you know I *philia* you – I like you, I love you with a brotherly love – but I can't say I “agape” you”. Three times.

John 21:17-19

17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love [agape] Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?"

And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love [philia] You."

Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep. 18 Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish." 19 This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, **"Follow Me."**

Brethren, this is recorded for all of us. All twelve disciples either betrayed, abandoned or denied their Christ except ultimately John. Not just Judas Iscariot. Peter did 3x. The other 10 fled, remember, except John came back to be with Him at the cross – along with the women. But the men? They fled. And I doubt, in the face of Roman brutality, we would have done any differently.

So what does King Yeshua say to Peter? “Follow Me”.
And what does our King say to you and to me? “Follow me”.

What does that *mean*? He is saying, “identify with Me. Follow in My footsteps. Come out of the Babylon I called you out of. Be holy, for I am holy. Become like me. Grow in my image. Let ME be duplicated in you. You be witnesses of ME. Be holy in Me, be renewed in Me [our Savior says], be clean in Me, don’t touch the unclean things.

“Don’t just repent”, he continues. “Don’t just take off the filthy garments of sin. Take the next step. Repentance is just the first step. That just leaves you naked, like the end time Laodiceans. You must now finish getting dressed. Put on righteousness, MY righteousness. I’m offering you bright, clean wedding garments I have ready for you. So don’t just stand there naked – Put them on. Change! Be holy, be dressed and ready, and don’t long for the old comfortable dirty blue jeans you took off. Don’t go putting on the filthy garments ever again.”

Brethren, God offers the wedding garments, but He’s very much into free choice and so we must take them and put them on. We must put off the dirty ones. We must open the door of our lives to Him so we really can change. Much more on this later on the last day of Unleavened bread.

Let’s look at another example and another and another, until we get how seriously God views sin.

DAVID and URIAH

When David committed the sin with Bathsheba, what was more horrible to God? The sin of adultery when he gave in to the flesh and his weakness – or the premeditated, all-knowing murder of one of his top men? We often speak of Bathsheba. But scripture is much tougher on the issue of the murder of Uriah. Bathsheba was done in fleshly weakness, a la Romans 7 “that which I hate I do”. Uriah’s death was plotted and carefully orchestrated. It was premeditated. It was closer to an intentional sin.

I don’t know how else you could describe it and be honest with the story. By the way, it wasn’t just Uriah who died in that plot. Eighteen innocent Israelite soldiers also died with Uriah, so it wouldn’t be so obvious. Did you know that? (2 Sam. 11:24) Innocent sons, husbands, brothers – as David intentionally plotted the death of Uriah.

1 Kings 15:4-6 -- about Rehoboam/David

“Nevertheless for David’s sake Yahweh his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem, by setting up his son after him and by establishing Jerusalem; *5 because David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord*, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, *except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.*”

Hmm. Bathsheba’s not even mentioned. Do you see why I titled this section not “David and Bathsheba”, but “David and Uriah”? We probably would not have done any better than David did under the circumstances.

God forgave that also, but David had to pay severely! I want you to hear me say: God forgave that also, and will forgive you also, but just don’t take your sin casually. Go back some time and read what Nathan the prophet told David would result because of his horrible, horrible sin.

2 Samuel 12:7-12

This what Yahweh Elohim of Israel says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave your master's house to you and your master's wives into your arms, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if that was not enough, I would have given you even more. 9 Why then have you despised the command of Yahweh by doing what I consider evil? **You** struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife as your own wife—you murdered him with the Ammonite's sword. 10 Now therefore, the sword will never leave your house **because you despised Me** and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own wife.'

[How does God view us when we sin? It makes Him feel like He and His way are despicable to us. Like we despise our Creator! That's what David heard, so why would it be any different for you and me?]

11 "This is what Yahweh says, 'I am going to bring disaster on you from your own family: I will take your wives and give them to another before your very eyes, and he will sleep with them publicly. 12 You acted in secret, but I will do this before all Israel and in broad daylight.'"

But even with that, because King David repented so deeply, Yahweh allowed him to continue to be king. He was not stoned to death. El Shaddai allowed David's songs and prophecies to be read to this day. God forgave him so much that David will once again reign over Israel after the resurrection.

God is gracious... but, take it seriously

So even as tough as I intentionally want this sermon to be, please understand our God's grace and mercy and love for us is greater than our weaknesses.

So when we drink the Passover cup and eat of the broken manna, it should mean so much more to us this year than ever before.

And we've just got to get a handle on the sins of our lives – whether it's lack of self control, gossip, envy, jealousy, lust of all kinds which the Babylon around us makes so easy. What is it? Gluttony? Laziness? Rudeness? Taking Yahweh's name in vain? Not ready for the Sabbath?

All of us, children of God, let's start being real children of our Holy Father, live like Him, talk like Him, walk like Him, look like Him, and ... be more and more like Him. I am who I am, says Yahweh. He's for real. We now have to live what we claim to believe and what we claimed to have been resurrected to in our baptism: a new life, a new walk.

Guys, I speak of sex sins of lust, of improper use of the internet, for example. I speak of watching videos and even movies we pay hard-earned money for, so we can go listen to people say "the F word over and over", or curse God's name over and over, and use profanity over and over? Is that really where we want to take the Spirit of the Holy One? I speak of going into places God's spirit is grieved to see us go into. I preach to myself too. It's time. It's time we stop identifying with the Devil and his places, his movies, his entertainment, and his thoughts – and cleanse ourselves of that filth once and for all.

What about other sins of gluttony? Of defiling the temple of the Holy Spirit in other ways, such as being obese, or out of shape, or of eating and drinking all the things that bring no glory to Yahweh? When is that a sin of ignorance and weakness – vs. a willfully defiant attitude that says, “this is just the way I am, and accept me like this or forget it”? I know, I know. I’m obese myself. I’ve been fighting this matter of misusing the temple of God’s spirit myself for a long time. But I am fighting it and I am losing weight, slowly. I’m tired of making excuses for it. So any of you obese people – I sympathize. But I will no longer excuse myself but intend to no longer be obese by this time 2 years from now. Two years? It took me 20 years to get here and I can take two years to take it off.

What about drinking too much and not retaining control of our minds as we should? What about the pleasurable sin of gossip? What about anything we are doing which goes against God’s word – all of that is sin! How about when we disrespect the national leaders whom God has commanded His children to honor (1 Pet. 3:17). When does it become a willful sin when we don’t obey that?

How about the sins of not reconciling with our brother and sister? Of refusing to come together with other children of God? When are we going to start doing something about it? When are you going to start doing something about it? When does that turn from being a sin of ignorance to a willful sin?

Let me hasten to add: I don’t think what I’ve just described falls into the category of someone sinning “willfully” – but it’s awfully, awfully close to the line. Yes, I think and I believe, and I teach, that in those times of lazy weakness, I can wake up and repent of it.

But brethren, when are we going to wake up to the enormity of sin? When are we going to wake up to see with whom we are identifying when we sin so casually?

If we could see the Christ

I sometimes wonder how easily we would lust, or gossip, or break the Sabbath – working after Friday sundown for example – if we could suddenly in a time machine be placed on Golgotha, and see what it took for our sin to be forgiven. If we could see our Master up there naked, beaten, bleeding badly all over, impaled on a tree for us, so we could be forgiven.... Is any sin really worth that?

Yes and no. Yes, in that, that is what it takes to forgive the sin.

No, in that when we put it that way, surely we can fight sin more than we have been.

What am I saying? When we’re being tempted to sin, let’s be more aware of the cost of redemption. More aware of the way Father sees it now, especially for those of us who have been in the Body for so many years. Then do what it takes to fight it, to resist it. Pray, fast, flee, call someone, do something!

It’s TIME

It’s time, brethren. Time for brothers and sisters to repent to our Father. Time for us to come together and get along. It’s time to get serious about sin and serious about righteousness. I preach to myself. It’s time for us to put sin out and be living witnesses that the Messiah lives – because it is becoming more and more obvious over time that the living, resurrected Messiah is living His radically new life in each of us. Yes, it takes time. “until Christ is formed in you”, Gal. 4:19 says. until we come to the fullness of the stature of Christ – Eph 2 says. But after all these years, should there not be more fruit of God’s spirit than we often see? I realize fruit comes in its season.

It's time. It's time to repent. It's time to wake up. It's time to spiritually delevain. It's time to change our garments. It's time to put on the wedding garments of His righteousness that becomes OUR righteousness also. It's time to be more and more like Him. It's time to take His light in us out from under the bushel basket. It's time to let the salt of His way be seasoning our lives and the lives of all we touch. It's time to be His new creation. It's time.

This Passover, as we take the wine and break and the bread together, let's rededicate ourselves to Him and to one another as well, as parts of His holy body.

THE HOW in all of this

I used to hate hearing sermons that told me to do this or that, to be this or that way – without ever telling me HOW. So many sermons miss “the why” and “the how” of their message, so I don't want to be guilty of that. I'm almost out of time, and I want to say that the REAL “how” will be coming in a sermon I'll give on the Last Day of Unleavened bread this year. It will be a lot deeper and hit the crux of HOW, which I'll leave for then. But here are a few steps we can start with until I discuss the real crux of how.

So here are a few steps we can take to help us take sin much more seriously and to quit sinning so easily:

- **Do a complete and honest evaluation of where you are, where you've come since your confession of Christ and since your baptism. Make a commitment to change and to put sin out – which is the real leavening.** Show no mercy even to “the smallest sins” that we tolerate in our lives. I preach to myself. I also, have way too many sins I've allowed to remain in my life, and if you're honest, so do you. **It's a total surrender of what we have been and what we have held before God.** God says “put sin to death”. We've got to get serious about this.

Colossians 3:5-10

5 Therefore, **put to death [mortify] whatever in you is worldly**: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, God's wrath comes on the disobedient, 7 and you once walked in these things when you were living in them. 8 But now you must also put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his practices 10 and have put on the new man, who is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of his Creator.

Ephesians 4:17-24

17 Therefore, I say this and testify in the Lord: **You should no longer walk as the Gentiles walk**, in the futility of their thoughts. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, excluded from the life of God, *because of the ignorance that is in them* and because of the hardness of their hearts. 19 They became callous and gave themselves over to promiscuity for the practice of every kind of impurity with a desire for more and more.

20 But that is not how you learned about the Messiah, 21 assuming you heard Him and were taught by Him, because the truth is in Jesus: 22 *you took off your former way of life, the old man that is corrupted by deceitful desires*; 23 *you are being renewed in the spirit of your*

minds; 24 you put on the new man, the one created according to God's likeness in righteousness and purity of the truth.

- **ASK YESHUA TO RENEW YOUR LIFE and to LIVE IN YOU.** Give yourself up completely to His renewal. Ask Him to shine in your life. Ask Him to be your new life. “You no longer live, but the life you live...” **The newness has to be HIM, not you.** Much, much more on this HUGE key in a coming sermon.
- **Study what scripture has to say about your specific weaknesses – but especially study the righteous opposites of those weaknesses.** (Rudeness- gentleness; impatience – patience; meanness – kindness; self-centered – selfless; vanity/pride – humility; lust – self-control; etc.) Focus on where you want to be, not where you are now.

Focus on the goal, not where you're currently stuck. Notice the opposites being emphasized in what we are about to read:

Ephesians 4:25-32

25 Since you put away lying, Speak the truth, each one to his neighbor, because we are members of one another. 26 Be angry and do not sin. Don't let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and don't give the Devil an opportunity. 28 The thief must no longer steal. Instead, he must do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need. 29 No rotten talk should come from your mouth, but only what is good for the building up of someone in need, in order to give grace to those who hear. 30 And don't grieve God's Holy Spirit, who sealed you for the day of redemption. 31 All bitterness, anger and wrath, insult and slander must be removed from you, along with all wickedness. 32 And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.

- **Get a mentor and helper; team up with someone.** Scripture indicates the brethren do this for each other. It's not just the ordained ministers' job. We're all being called to do our part in the holy spiritual temple and body of Christ.

In **James 5:16** we're commanded to confess our sins one to another. We don't do that. The Greek in James 5:16 for “trespasses” is *hamartia*, meaning sins, offences. Who's doing this?

Ephesians 4:15-16 ASB

15 But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ. 16 From Him the whole body, fitted and knit together *by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body* for building up itself in love **by the proper working of each individual part.**

Heb 10:25 speaks of exhorting one another, even more so as the day draws near.

In my business, when someone has a weakness affecting his/her production, that person seeks out a mentor. I have mentored dozens over the years in business. I have used mentors to help me. Why don't we do that spiritually? Why don't we obey that verse and call someone up and say, “Hey, I need help from time to time. I have weaknesses. Can I call you, when I'm being tempted to give in to my weaknesses, and I hope you will put some of the right fear of God into me and encourage me

to fight the temptation and to win?" Just make sure your mentor doesn't have a problem with gossip! (lol).

A three-stranded rope isn't easily snapped. Who will you "strand" with?

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

9 Two are better than one...

10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion.

But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up.

11 Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; But how can one be warm alone?

12 Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him.

And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

Colossians 3:16

16 Let the message about the Messiah dwell richly among you, **teaching and admonishing one another** in all wisdom, and singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God.

So, will you mentor someone? Will you find a mentor for yourself? That will be tough, but that is what we're told.

- **Feed the spiritual side of your life; starve the carnal side. We become what we think about.** Our focus has to turn more spiritual.

Col. 3:2-4

Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with the Messiah in God. 4 When the Messiah, who is your life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

1 Peter 1:13-21 [makes it clear, we've been called to change]

13 Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 14 **as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, *as in your ignorance***; 15 **but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct**, 16 **because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."**

17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. 20 He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you 21 who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

Brethren, I'm sure you've gotten the point by now.

As we come to Passover, let's re-dedicate ourselves to our wonderful King, Husband and Savior – and show we are in earnest about growing, overcoming and letting Him shine in us. It's His life, His righteousness, His way, His mind... and He is the manna from heaven that we must feast on. May Father bless you all, and be with you all. Until next time, this is your brother Philip Shields.