

Study Questions Short of the Glory

11 June 2023

Read: Romans 1:16-19, 25, 29-31, 3:22b-28

1. Do we really believe that “there is no distinction,” that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”?
2. What did James suggest the essence of sin was?
 - a. “In essence sin is rebellion against God. Pride is the original sin that leads us to believe we know what is best for us - and often for others. God is out of touch with our reality so we reject the Divine guidance and seek to make our own decisions, trusting in our own knowledge and wisdom. We rebel, and a wedge is driven between us and our God...”
3. James also suggested that the lists of individual sins served an important purpose. What was that purpose? And why do we need it?
 - a. “Lists like this serve as flags for types of attitude and behaviour that function in an alienating way - that function as barriers between us and God.”
 - b. “These flags are important, because we also can be very good at kidding ourselves.”
4. James suggested 2 reasons why we often don't take our own sins seriously. What are those reasons? Can you think of any others?
 - a. “The first is that we have a desperately diminished and skewed understanding of what sin actually is.” The second and more fundamental reason is that as a rule we compare our behaviour to the worst of human behaviour rather than the righteousness - the glory - of God. The only way we can continue to treat our sinful condition lightly is if we keep our distance from God.
5. What is one of the consequences of not taking our sin seriously when it comes to God's rescue plan?

- a. “One of the grievous consequences of not taking our own sin seriously is that God’s solution for our dilemma, God’s redemptive work in Jesus, is also diminished in its significance for us.... In our minds we don’t really have all that much to be forgiven.”
6. Once we have experienced God’s redeeming work in our lives, we have important choices to make. What are the choices mentioned in the sermon?
 - a. “The **first** choice is whether to acknowledge and accept our desperate state in the light of God’s free offer of grace.” The **second** choice is about where our focus will lie once we’ve been confronted with the severity of our sin: either the horror of our sin or the wonder of God’s grace. The **third** choice is whether to shrink from God’s glory, fearful of the purifying fire of God’s holiness, or courageously to draw nearer to God regardless of consequence.
7. Why does Paul emphasize in vs 27 that with this plan of redemption there is no room for boasting?
 - a. “Pride, or self-idolatry led humanity to rebel against God and God’s guidance for our race. And were there a plan of redemption that left room for pride - for boasting - most certainly the same thing would happen all over again. No, in this plan there is no room for pride, just the humble gratitude of the rescued.”