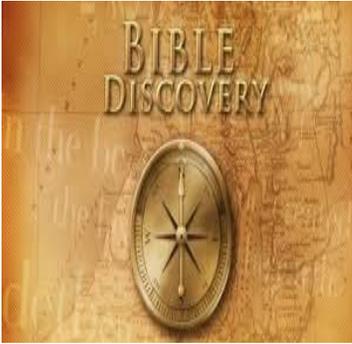
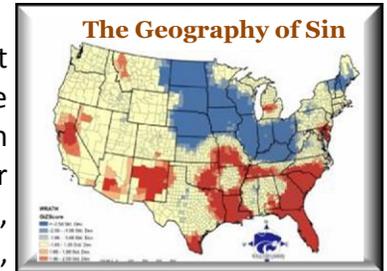


## The Geography of Sin



Last Sunday, for those who were able to be with us, I concluded the message asking that you leave here having no doubt but that Christ has freed you from sin, that He has provided the assurance you're loved and you're alive with Him if you've said yes to His rich salvation. How has your week been? My prayer is you've indeed lived well and felt the full presence of Jesus in your daily walk with Him; that you've experienced joy and laughter and the depth of His wonderful grace. My prayer, also, is you've enjoyed God's wonderful strength to keep you from the agonizing pull of Satan's grip as he works drawing you into the geography of sin.

Thinking of the outward appearance of the geography of sin, researchers at Kansas State University created a map across the USA of the prevalence of the Seven Deadly Sins – envy, gluttony, greed, lust, pride, sloth and wrath – though there is no such actual biblical list because God has made it abundantly clear throughout scripture that all and any sins are deadly. More to the point, however, truthfully, is the real geography of sin can't be measured by scientists, shown on a map, or witnessed through outward displays of socially unacceptable conduct. While scientists can measure some of the social effects of sin, the real geography of sin is anything but external. That was the tragic mistake of the Pharisees. They thought the important thing for their walk with God was to look good. And they seemed to have achieved that – at least everyone feared them. They spouted hand-washing and not doing “*wrong*” things (*as they considered them*) on the Sabbath. But Jesus didn't think much of them and He had his own study of the geography of sin - He called them “*white washed tombs.*” [Matthew 23:27] They might've been ceremonially clean *externally* but they remained filthy on the inside. So it is with all of us. The prophet Jeremiah wrote, “*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can understand it?*” [Jeremiah 17:9]



We're putting nothing over on God when we disguise our behaviour – our gut wrenching lusts, greed, hatred, envy and wrath. God knows our heart! We're fallen creatures. Adam and Eve fell in the garden, failing to put their trust in the Lord God; Abraham failed to trust the Lord for safety running to Egypt where he alluded that Sarah was his sister rather than his wife – to save his own skin. Moses let anger boil over and slew an Egyptian slave-keeper then ran away to the desert. Humans have always been reluctant to come to grips with the reality of the fall and its consequences. This is the reason God gave us the law: to teach us the greatness of our sin and misery. Unlike our own shifting consciousness of sin, the law is relentless like a flashing neon sign: “Do this and live;” “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the book of the law;” “Love God with your whole heart and your neighbour as yourself.”

Foremost, consider King David – a man after God's own heart; he trusted in God to slay the giant Goliath with a sling and five little stones; during years on the run from a jealous Saul, David trusted in God to provide for him and protect him. During this time David knew war and the battles he fought, he fought for the Lord and the Lord sustained him and therefore David saw great success and God seated him on the throne as king of Israel. In all of this David honoured God and God blessed David. What went wrong?

### “The Time Kings Go Off to War”

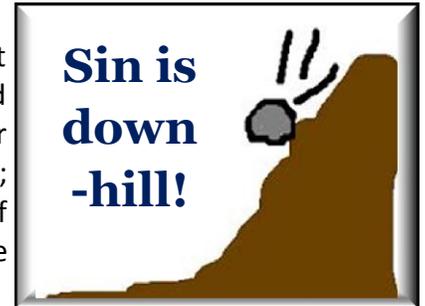
Observe the occasion of David's great sin. What led to David finding the geography of sin? Well, first we're told that it was “*the time kings go off to war*”. So where was David? Our reading tells us David sent Joab with the king's men...but David remained in Jerusalem. David stayed where he shouldn't have been. How often does our sin begin with our tarrying in places we have no right to be in the first place? We stop off at the local bar for a quick drink after work then we notice the great looking gal making eyes at us. We would tell everyone later (after we've destroyed our marriage) it was never our intention for more than one little drink.

But why did we stop in the first place? Or we're searching on the computer in fields we're not meant to graze in. Or we go looking at open-houses (the ones we can't afford) and just have to have the new and improved and so we borrow beyond our means. We get into trouble because we wander. We must confess we're out of the way of our duty, our responsibilities – we've opened ourselves to temptation.

### ***“Walked Around the Roof of the Palace”***

Secondly, examine the idleness in David's life. He has sent the men of Israel – the whole Israelite army – into battle while he *“walked around the roof of the palace”*. Nothing to do - the king had nothing to do - but walk about and gaze over at the other roofs in the neighbourhood. This love of ease, this dereliction of duty gives great advantage to the tempter.

Such temptation opens the idle to a wandering eye. Had David been about the affairs of state, had David remembered his covenant with God, had David honoured his vows to his wife, he would not be looking over the fence for greener grass. And notice the steps of sin. See how the way of sin is down-hill; when we begin to do evil, we can't easily stop. Observe the aggravations of the sin. How could David rebuke or punish sin in others as their king, when he was conscious that he himself was guilty?



As we continue the story of David and Bathsheba, we learn she becomes pregnant with his child. Rather than confess the wrong and make things right, David sends for Bathsheba's husband Uriah to come home intending that Uriah would have relations with his wife and no one will be the wiser. But the honourable man that is Uriah refuses while all the other men are at war. Now what can David do? Surely this man of God will come clean and confess? NO. He orders the Captain of the Guard, Joab, to *“put Uriah on the front line where the fighting is fiercest”* [2 Samuel 11:15] and Uriah died.

**Celebrate that God is able to keep us from sin so we miss the terrible consequences!**

But God was not finished with David. In chapter 12 of 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel, God sends the prophet Nathan to David and convicts David of his great sin. The end of the story is not one of the impenetrable darkness of sin, but of the grace and mercy of our Living God. But with that rescue came consequences. It is the same today. Praise God He forgives us of our sins, He rescues us from the shores of damnation, but celebrate much more that God is willing and able to keep us from sin so we miss the terrible consequence of our wayward actions. I knew a man who accepted Jesus later in life; his deepest regret was the years lost – years which included broken marriages, lost jobs, alienation from his children, the years of emptiness and useless pursuit. And consider the young lady who spoke years ago at a rally to promote sober driving telling her story of not drinking but of having gotten in the car with a drunk driver. After the accident, both God and her parents forgave her for her poor decision but she still had to live her life with an amputated leg.

The geography of sin – that terminal condition of the human heart, outside of the grace of Christ, tells a terrible story of defiance before God and of the great cost of that defiance in the ongoing consequences of our sin. There's nothing light or amusing about sin and death; there's nothing triumphant in defying our Lord; there's nothing hopeful in living a life separated from God for all eternity, but there is great joy in the Good News, that there's a solution for sinners like you and me, a Saviour - His name is Jesus! Knowing the gravity of our condition, the greatness of our need; knowing what it would cost Him; God's Son yet came as the Redeemer of sinners. By obedience to His Father's will for us – Jesus met God's standard of perfection when we would not, could not be – He opened the way to God through His body, through His own blood shed for us sinners. God loves sinners that much!

Because of that great love through Jesus Christ there's a way to depart from the geography of sin and to live lives worthy of our salvation. Romans 8:1, reminds us, *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in*

**Because of love of Jesus there's a way to depart from geography of sin!**

Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." ***That's the key, isn't it?*** We must walk in the Spirit of the Lord and not pursue our own fleshly desires. The Apostle Peter encourages, "Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul." [1 Peter 2:11] And the Apostle John tells us, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever." [1 John 2:15-17]

**We choose daily to love God and honour great sacrifice given for our sin because Jesus has redeemed us by blood of the perfect Lamb!**

This morning we've been instructed in recognizing the geography of sin and fleeing from it. We have recognized we're drawn into sin when we refuse to be alert and discerning in all circumstances – what we read, what we watch, where we go, what we do – and that we must choose daily to love God and honour the great sacrifice given for the payment of our sin because Jesus has redeemed us by the blood of the perfect Lamb. We've heard that we must not love the world but do the will of God. And so I have one question which I sense may be on your mind. While it is good and sensible to pursue godliness and to abhor sin, while it is reasonable for a pastor to implore his people to live for God and to stay clear from the geography of sin, perhaps one question

remains which is, HOW?

One of the best ways I can suggest for each of us is to fill our lives with Christ. We do that first by learning the lesson of David so long ago that when it is the season for us to stand and fight the battle of sin, we put on the armour of God and we go to battle rather than remaining in the vicinity of temptation and then secondly, we recognize that it is not by our natural might but through the grace and strength of God, through the presence of His Holy Spirit in our lives that we are enabled to stand against the enemy. And we do this by making a choice. What will you fill your mind with? If you fill your mind with the things of this world, God help you; but if you allow God to fill you with His Word, if your thoughts are fed through praises and good news of Jesus Christ, then I believe my friends, "whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy" [Philippians 4:8] will fill your hearts and minds and God's Spirit will hold you apart from the geography of sin. With that in mind, there is one thing to think on that will keep you from sin using this acronym - JESUS –

*Just Ensure Sheltered Under Saviour*

That's where we all need to find ourselves. Suffering from the geography of sin? Today is the day given for the opportunity to turn your life around. If we can help you as you make this great and wonderful decision give us a call at 1-519-317-8659 or through our website at [www.mtbrydgesbaptist.ca](http://www.mtbrydgesbaptist.ca).

*Blessings,*

*Pastor Dave*