

# THE POWER OF CHRIST

SERMONS BY TEXAS BAPTIST PASTORS

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## SERMON TWELVE

**SIN**

By

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**“Sin is the transgression of the law”** (I John 3:4).

In order to have men fall out with sin and fall in with God, we must picture sin as hideous as idiocy, as black as hell and as destructive as a storm when it breaks with all its fury upon man.

Too many, far too many, have tried to sugar-coat, beautify and embellish sin with a veneer of short words and beautiful phrases. If I were an artist and should try to paint sin’s true nature, I would dip my brush in the blackest of soot, ink and tar, all mingled together, and produce a picture idiotic in expression, insane in looks and violent in form, on the blackest of black backgrounds and in the vilest of surroundings.

### *The Tendency of Sin.*

Jesus, the most sensitive soul on earth and the purest character, tried to give us in parable the tendency of sin in this world. He could paint no better picture than that of a young man going out hopeful and respectable, with a high head, proud walk and pocket full of money into a far country.

After living riotously, he found himself penniless, homeless, friendless, breadless, and jobless—destitute of all that makes for manhood and happy living. His condition and position in life were so miserable and wretched that **“he would fain have filled himself with the husks the swine did eat, and no man gave unto him.”**

Jesus showed that the end of the road of sin is—stark loneliness, gnawing hunger, want and destitution—the hog pen.

That, said Jesus, is the tendency of all sin. That is the final result of sin. That is the fruit of sin. The whole thing beggars description. Words fail; the paint is never black enough; the picture is never hideous enough to paint or describe sin as black as it is.

*The Master's Definition of Sin.*

What marvelous short definitions John gives us in his first letter to the church. They have never been surpassed. They are fundamental and primary. As the Holy Spirit inspired John, he wrote, defining, saying “**God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.**” In creation, God said, “**Let there be light,**” and there was light. God’s Son said, “**I am the light of the world,**” and John said, “**He is the light that lighteth every man’s way that comes into the world.**”

This old world of sin and sorrow would be a dark and dreary place to live but for the light that is shed on our way from God.

Again, “**God is love.**” What a marvelous definition of God. This is the first thing we teach in the Cradle Roll and kindergarten. Any child can understand this definition of God.

- God is love and He sends His rain and sunshine on the just and unjust;
- God is love and He gave His only begotten Son to a lost and sinful world;
- God is love and He sends His Holy Spirit to woo and win our sinful hearts;
- God is love and all things work together for good to them who love the Lord.

We ought to shout when we think of God’s love so deep, so wide, so high, that all are included in it. Yes! He included me too!

Again, John says, “**Sin is lawlessness.**” Sin defiles, violates, breaks and crushes under foot every law of God, every principle of truth and every statute divine. Sin knows no law but the law of selfishness; it regards no rights but the right to do as one pleases.

Paul, in naming the fruit of the Spirit, says, “**Against such there is no law.**” But sin, being self-willed and self-determined and feeling self-sufficient, despises all bounds, all rules and every right. Sin is lawlessness.

Again, “**All unrighteousness is sin.**” “**There is a sin unto death and a sin not unto death.**” That sin unto death surely must be the sin against the Holy Spirit which is committed when one says no! and no! and no! to the Holy Spirit’s wooing. When one commits it, God says, don’t bother me with him. There is no forgiveness in this world or in the world to come.

But there is a sin not unto death, sin that may be forgiven and blotted out and covered. If you would know, then, what sin is, ask this question, “Is it right?” How does it look when judged by the standards of God’s Word? How will it look in the white light of the judgment throne?

Is it right?

If it is not right, if it does not accord and harmonize with right principles, if it is not under-girded by truth and supported by the Word divine, it is sin.

All unrighteousness is sin and all sin is unrighteousness.

### *The Origin of Sin.*

The fountain source of sin is the Devil. He is the father of all lies and all liars. The deceitfulness of sin comes from the great deceiver of men.

- He deceived our first parents in the garden of Eden and is still doing business at the same old stand.
- He raises questions, creates doubt, and blurs and vitiates the judgment and discernment of men.
- He appears as an angel of light, as a wolf in sheep's clothing and would have men believe that black is white; that error is pure truth and that good is to be found in all things evil.

The forbidden fruit seemed to be **“good for food, a delight to the eyes, and desired to make one wise.”** Surely sin is deceitful when it originates with the great deceiver of men.

### *The genealogy of sin is evil.*

When one is tempted to sin, drawn away by his own lust, and takes his first step toward hell, he does so by following the lust of his eyes, the lust of his flesh and the vainglory of life. God says, **“When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”**

Sin is the child of lust and the father of death. There is but a step between the lust of the eyes and death. That one lone step is sin. David found it so when he walked out on his palace roof and watched a woman bathe. There came in the wake of that look one death after another: the death of his faithful soldier, Uriah; the death of his child; the death of Abijah; the death of Absalom. It looked as if David would never get through reaping death from that look.

### *The destructive power of sin—how terrible!*

- It will wreck and ruin anything anywhere at any time.
- It will ruin and wreck business;
- It will cause nations to go on the rocks;
- It will destroy every vestige of a home;
- It will kill churches and rob them of all spiritual power and holy influence.
- It sweeps all before it like a mighty cyclone.
- It will take all that is human out of a man, and leave him more of a beast than a man.
- It is one force in this world that will mar, break, and annihilate completely the handiwork of God.
- It is the door of the junk heap of humanity and the very gate to hell and wretchedness.

Let us fear nothing so much as we do sin. Knowing its power to mar, ruin and wreck all that come under its blighting, benighting and benumbing influence, let us be done with it forever!

There are all sorts and varieties of sin: the sin of neglect; the sin of hatred; and the sins of commission and omission.

We have little trouble of labeling sins of commission, such as lying, stealing, gambling, and drinking, but sins of omission are the ones we fail sometimes to recognize. God says, **“To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”**

Here is where our Holy Roller, Sinless Perfection and Pentecostal friends get a crimp in their unholy boasting. Sins of omission are just as damning and blighting as sins of commission. God says, **“All unrighteousness is sin.”**

Let me ask, is it right to live in a community and receive the blessings of a church and live in the atmosphere created by the church and refuse to give that church the greatest gift you can make—the gift of the influence of your example?

Is it right for a Baptist to refuse to line up with a church in the community in which he lives?

There are so many who sin grievously right here. In this age of moving from one community to another, the unaffiliated Baptist is one of the acute problems we face. There are many excuses, but simmered down they are two. Some excuse themselves by saying, “They are not settled.” But when is one settled? None are settled until God settles his soul in eternity and his body in the ground. Does anyone wish to be settled? Then let it be known and we will ask God to settle them. No! None of us want to be settled yet.

Another excuse some make is that they don’t know whether they are going to stay or not. How long have you been here? One who had been in a community was asked by the writer why they didn’t move their membership. They replied, saying they didn’t know whether they were going to stay or not.

“How long have you been here?” was asked.

“We’ve been here six years,” they said.

“Then,” said the writer, “you are not going to stay, you have already stayed.”

When will our people face this serious problem and face it with reason and religion and solve it in the Lord? May God help us to realize that if a thing is not right, it is sin and sins of omission many times are as damning and as blighting as sins of commission.

The chief of all sins is that of unbelief. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit when He is come would convict the world of sin **“because they believed not on Me.”**

There is no sin more heartbreaking, or more destructive than the sin of unbelief— **“the fearful and unbelieving”** are catalogued by God’s Word along with the idolater, sorcerer and drunkard and will have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

How awful the sin of unbelief cuts and bruises and breaks!

Some years ago a little woman came to my study, all nervous and crying and wringing her hands. When she was quieted and asked what the trouble was, she replied that she hadn't slept a wink the night before. Her husband had come in and said, "I don't believe in you." It broke her heart, it cut like a knife, it bruised like a scourge and it crushed like a weight!

Oh! for one to stand out and apart from Jesus Christ after every evidence has been given that He is the only begotten Son of God; to look on His hands, His feet, His side that were pierced and opened for you; to study His life, so full of love and service for mankind, and then to say, "I don't believe in You, I doubt You, I think You are an imposter"—this is the sin of sins and the depth of ingratitude. One might not be guilty of many other sins which are common among men, but this sin of unbelief will be enough to sink one's soul into hell.

The remedy of sin is Jesus and Jesus only. At the cross, at the cross is where we have the burden of sin lifted and the guilt of sin removed and the curse of sin taken away.

- **"Come now and let us reason together: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be white as wool."**
- **"When I see the blood, I will pass over you."**
- **"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all unrighteousness."**

Faith in the shed blood of Jesus is the world's one and only hope to get rid of sin.

Only God can forgive sin.

- Notice wrongdoing related to society is vice and society can frown on or favor vice as it sees fit.
- Wrongdoing related to the state is crime and the state can punish or pardon crime as it thinks best.
- But wrongdoing related to God is sin and only God can forgive.

Every time the black-bosomed priest whispers in the ear of the confessor, "I absolve thee," he lies, for only God can absolve one from sin. David cried, **"Against Thee, and Thee only have I sinned, O God."**

When Jesus spoke to the paralytic let down through the house top, saying, **"Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee,"** He was speaking as God.

What is forgiveness? The forgiveness of sin is simply God saying, "My child, I love you." Sin creates a chasm between the soul and God. Not until one comes and confesses sin, can God forgive. Forgiveness of sin does not mean sweeping away the penalty of sin. If one sins, he must reap in this world, but when sin is confessed and forgiven the chasm is removed. Then nothing but love undeflected is between God and the forgiven soul.

Some time ago a son wronged his father. There was a chasm between the father and son because of the wrong done.

Soon the son came and said, “Dad, I’m sorry.”

The father replied, “My boy, I’m glad you said that. I love you, my boy. There is nothing now but love between us.”

Any soul that comes to Jesus and says, “I’ve sinned,” will hear God say, “My child, I love you. Your sins have been buried in the depths of the sea, they have been blotted out as a thick cloud, they have been removed from you as far as the east is from the west. Your sins, black and ugly and hideous, are cast behind my back.”

So we can sing:

“At the cross, at the cross, where I first saw the light,  
And the burden of my heart rolled away;  
It was there by faith I received my sight  
And now I am happy all the day.”

Dr. Porter Marcellus Bailes was born at Ft. Mill, S. C, March 18, 1888. Education, Mars Hill College, Furman U., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (A.B., Th.M., D.D.). Ordained, Aug., 1911. Pastorates: Rural churches, 1911-16; Lagrange, Ky., 1916-17; Greer, S. C., 1917-26; Lakeland, Fla., 1926-29; Tyler, Tex., May, 1929, to date.

First Baptist Church, Tyler, has 2,459 members. Since May, 1929, under Dr. Bailes’ ministry, there have been 2,322 additions. Total contributions have been \$308,345. Their record S. S. attendance is 859. Total value of all church property is \$176,000 (All statistics as of Dec. 15, 1937).

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