

BY THEM IS THY SERVANT WARNED

This morning we are going to go back to our series on the Word of God. We got away from it for a little while during the holidays, but there are a few more things I feel led to cover before we move on to something else.

In the way of a review, I'm going to start out by asking some questions. The first three are fairly easy.

1) Does God have **the right** to tell us what to do? Yes, He does!

2) Has God revealed **everything** there is to know in the Bible? No, He hasn't!

Deut 29:29 "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law."

Some things are secret and **known only** to God—meaning God has **not revealed** everything there is to know. But God has revealed what we **need** to know!

3) Do you believe God has revealed to us **the truth**? Yes, He has!

John 17:17 "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

Now for the hard question—Do you **treat the Bible** like you believe it's true? Here's what I mean. Notice **Psalm 19:11** on your outline: "Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward." To rephrase the question, do you treat this book as a source of **warnings** from God—and that there is "**great reward**" in obeying what God says? This morning we are going to focus on the first half of the verse—"by them is thy servant warned." Even that is a broad subject, though, so we are only going to focus on one warning from the OT that is still relevant for us today.

If we were in a Bible study setting, I'd ask you what some of the warnings are in the OT. Since we aren't, I'm just going to give you a few of the ones we **won't** be looking at...today, anyway!

1) Not to follow after false gods. We touched on that some last week. Deut 6:14-15 "Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you; ¹⁵ (For the Lord thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth."

2) We don't know what tomorrow holds. Prov 27:1 "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

3) Judgment follows death. **Eccl 12:13-14** "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴ **For God shall bring every work into judgment**, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."

Now for the one **we are** going to look at: ***Our sin is not hidden from God!***

We know that—in our heads—but it is amazing how quickly we seem to forget it and act like it is not true! Let's consider first...**1. The declaration from God**

Numbers 32:23 "But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and **be sure your sin will find you out.**" Our sin is **known** by God—and our sin will be **brought to light** by God!

A. God sees it all

Psalm 94:7-9 "Yet they say, The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. ⁸ Understand, ye brutish among the people: and ye fools, when will ye be wise? ⁹ He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that **formed the eye, shall He not see?**"

Psalm 139:12 "Yea, the **darkness** hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the **darkness and the light are both alike to thee.**"

Proverbs 15:3 "The **eyes of the Lord are in every place**, beholding the evil and the good."

B. God will judge it all

We saw that earlier in **Eccl 12:14** - "God shall bring **every work** into judgment, with **every secret** thing..."

I Sam 2:3 “Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by **Him actions are weighed.**”

Proverbs 28:13 is one of the many bad news/good news kind of verses in the Bible.

First the **bad** news: “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper...” Why? Because they are known by God and God won’t allow you to prosper!

Now the **good** news: “...but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

Simply put, when **in pride** you hide—or hang onto—your sin, God won’t bless you! But when **you confess it**—meaning acknowledge it; and do what you can to **forsake it**—meaning stop doing it; God will have mercy and forgive you!

What I want to do now is give 2 Bible examples of people experiencing “be sure your sin will find you out!”

2. Demonstration from the OT that our sin will find us out

Probably the most **well-known** example of someone hiding their sin—and it being “found out”—is in the book of Joshua. God instructed His people through Joshua that all the silver and gold from Jericho was to be dedicated to God. Achan, however, took some for himself and his sin was soon found out.

We’re going to look at a different example, though. The example we are going to look at is also well-known—but not because of sin being “found out.” Instead, we think of it is a marvelous example of **forgiveness**. You already know from your outline that I’m referring to the account of Joseph and his brothers.

What we’ll notice this morning, though, is that it **is also** a wonderful example of **sin being hidden**—but God bringing it to light! Please turn to Genesis 37. This account covers most of the rest of Genesis—which is 14 chapters—so we obviously can’t read through the whole thing!

A. The sin committed by Joseph’s brothers

--In Gen 37:2, we see that Joseph is 17.

--In vs 13, his father Israel—aka Jacob—sends him to see how his brothers are doing.

--Now vss 18-20.

--In vs 21, Reuben—the firstborn—said “Let us not kill him...; let’s throw him in a pit instead!” Reuben’s plan was to come back later and pull him.

--In vss 23-24, they stripped off his coat of many colors and threw him into a pit.

--In vs 28, he is sold for 20 pieces of silver to Ishmeelites that are heading to Egypt.

--Now vss 31-35. Imagine trying to “comfort” your father when you are **lying through your teeth** as far as what had happened to **his son**—and **your brother**!

B. The sin cleverly confronted by Joseph

--Fast forward 13 years. According to Gen 41:46, Joseph was now 30. He had spent his last 2 years in prison for something he didn’t do but was freed because he interpreted Pharaoh’s dream. God used Joseph—and Pharaoh’s dream—to prepare Egypt for 7 years of plenty, followed by 7 years of severe famine.

--Now Gen 42:3-7. Benjamin was left at home. Joseph recognized them, but they didn’t recognize him!

--In vs 9, Joseph accuses them of being spies, then locks them all up for 3 days according to vs 17

--In vss 19-20, Joseph says that **one of them** will remain behind while the rest bring the corn back. The next time they come, however, they **must bring** the youngest with them—meaning Benjamin.

--Now 42:21. Notice Reuben’s **confession**: “We are verily [truly] guilty concerning our brother...”

Not only does he admit guilt, he also believes that **God is** bringing consequences! Look at the last part of the verse: “...therefore is this distress come upon us.”

--That thought is continued in vs 22 “...Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child...”

In the end of the verse, we again see his belief that God is bring consequences for their sin: “...behold, also, his blood is required.” In other words, reckoning time has come for what we did!

--This, I believe, is **part** of what Joseph wanted to hear from his brothers. In vs 23, we are reminded that Joseph’s brothers didn’t think Joseph understood what they were saying. The significance in that is that they were **not saying it for his benefit**—they were saying it because that is how they truly felt!

They were being confronted with the fact that their sin had “found them out.” I also believe that they were confessing their sin to God. But there are two other people they needed to confess their sin to—**Joseph** himself and **their father!**

C. The sin confessed by Joseph’s brothers

--Due to time, I have to leave out a lot of the details. They go back to Canaan with their corn and when that runs out, they return to Egypt—this time with their brother Benjamin, just as Joseph had instructed.

--Look at Gen 45:3. Joseph reveals himself to his brothers who are naturally “troubled at his presence.”

--Now 45:5. Joseph obviously forgave them and tells them that God in His providence allowed this to happen in order to keep them from starving to death!

--Now vs 9. Imagine that—the 10 sons having to go back and **tell their father** that they had lied to him about what happened to Joseph!

--Now 45:25-28. We don’t have the details of what they **said** to their father, but they obviously had to tell their father how they had **staged Joseph’s death**—and that they had **sold him!** And now—15 years later—they had to **confess their sin** to their father!

Be sure your sin will find you out! Thankfully, though, because of God’s providence and Joseph’s humility and forgiveness, this account has a happy ending compared to the next one we are going to look at.

3. Demonstration from the NT that our sin will find us out

Please turn now to Acts 4. This account is much shorter than the last one—but is equally dramatic!

--Here in chapter 4, we have the background info. Please follow along as I read vs 33-37.

--In a nutshell, land and houses were being sold and the money was given to the apostles.

The application, of course, is that you all have to **sell your land and houses this week** and bring all the money to me next Sunday 😊! I’m totally kidding—don’t you dare!

--Now chapter 5, vs 1-4.

--Please understand that the sin was not because they **kept** part of the money for themselves! The sin was in **lying** about how much they got for the land—and **pretending they were giving the whole amount** they received—when that simply was not true! How exactly God gave this information to Peter, we are not told. But what we do know is this—the sin of Ananias and Sapphira was probably hid for a whopping 15 **minutes** compared to the 15 **years** that Joseph’s brother’s sin was hidden!

--Before moving to vs 5, these verses teach us something about the Holy Spirit that is easy to overlook because of the dramatic storyline. In vs 3, Peter says that Ananias lied to the **Holy Ghost**.

--In the end of vs 4, Peter says “thou hast not lied unto men, but **unto God.**” Peter is obviously confirming that the Holy Ghost—the Holy Spirit—**is God**, a member of the Trinity!

--In vs 5, God immediately strikes Ananias dead—with the result being “great fear came on all them that heard these things.”

--Now vs 8. Sapphira the wife comes and Peter says, “Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much!” She, too, lied—and God immediately killed her, too!

Thankfully, that is not the “normal” way God deals with lying! I’m 99.9% certain that if God immediately struck all liars dead, this would be an empty church! My point in looking at this is not to make you think **God will strike you dead** if you lie!

My point simply is this—Be sure your sin will find you out! God knows about our sin while we are still “hatching it out” in our minds, so to speak! No matter how good we are at hiding it, it is **not hidden** from God!

What I want to do now is shift gears a little bit and consider... **4. The doctrine of sin after salvation**

What does the Bible say about sinning after we are saved? I’ve referred a couple of times to Eccl 12:14 “**For God shall bring every work into judgment**, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

Does that mean God will **judge** us for our sins—even though Jesus died for them?

No; God does not **judge us** for our sins after we are born again and become His child. He may **chasten us** and bring consequences, but He does not **judge** us. So what's the difference between chastening and judgment?

And what should our attitude toward sin be now that we are a believer and follower of Christ?

First let's consider... A. The difference between chastening and judgment

--On the one hand, they are very **similar**—both come from God, both have to do with sin, and both hurt!

--There are 3 important differences, though—position, place, and permanence

--**Position** has to do with our relationship to God. God chastens His children; He judges those who aren't.

--**Place** has to do with location. God chastens His children **on earth**; He judges the unbeliever at the Great White Throne judgment!

--**Permanence** has to do with length. God chastens us for a short time; judgment is forever!

B. Truths about sin after salvation

Please take your Bibles and turn to I John 1. Can't spend much time on these, but I would encourage you to "chew on" these truths—and the verses that go with them—throughout the week.

1) We still sin. I John 1:8 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves..."

2) We should not want to sin. I John 2:1 "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not."

Romans 5:20b "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:"

Are there people that say—or at least think—let's "sin it up" because God is **abundant** in grace? There must be based on what Paul wrote in Romans 6:1-2 "What shall we say then? Shall we **continue in sin**, that grace may abound? ² **God forbid**. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

Our attitude should be to **hate sin** because that is what **led to** the death of Christ!

3) Our sin will still "find us out" because God doesn't want us to continue in it. God chastens us "...for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness." (**Hebrews 12:10b**)

4) It is not a sin **to be tempted** because Jesus was tempted. **Mt 4:1** "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be **tempted** of the devil." Sin is when we **give into** the temptation.

5) The penalty of our sin has been paid for by Jesus and will not be brought up when we stand before Him. Notice the end of I John 1: 7.

Hebrews 10:17 "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

Jude 24 "Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,"

6) Sin does not break our **relationship**—we are still His child—but it does break our **fellowship**, our closeness with Him. **Hebrews 12:7** "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?"

7) We need to follow—and claim—I John 1:9. When we sin, we need to confess that sin to God. But often when we sin, **another person** is involved. We need to ask that **person**—or multiple people—for forgiveness as well.

8) Disobedience after salvation leads to loss of reward—not loss of salvation.

I Cor 3:11-15 "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

--The foundation of your life—if you are a believer—is Jesus Christ.

¹² Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

--Right now...whether you believe it or not—or think about it or not—you are building on that fnd't'n

¹³ Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

--God will try...He will test...He will examine...our works—meaning what we have done for Him after we were saved.

¹⁴ If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.

--If what we have done after salvation is pleasing to God, we will be rewarded.

¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."

--If what we do after we are saved does not please God, we will be saved—but suffer loss of rewards that we could have had.

I want to end with how I began. Do you believe these are God's words? If so, you will also believe that "by them is thy servant warned." What was the warning for today? "Be sure, your sin will find you out!" We know—in our heads—that that's true. Let's start living like we believe it's true!

So what does God want you to do with what you heard this morning?

1. Make sure you are a child of God and are free from God's future judgment.
2. Second, don't think you can get away with your sin! It will find you out. Don't be proud—confess it and forsake it so you can have mercy and forgiveness from God.
3. On the flip side, don't let Satan rob you of the joy of being forgiven! "My sin, O the bliss, of this glorious thought. My sin—not in part, but the whole! Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord; Praise the Lord, O my soul!"