

Sunday, October 23rd sermon: “Polluted by the People’s Sin -- Put Not Your Trust in Princes (Part 7)”

Preached at the Lord's Table at Grace Bible Church in Greenwood, MS,
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Mark 1:40-45; Ephesians 5:1-2

Samuel warned that the people’s sin would destroy the people and their king.

Thus, the people end up destroying all the institutions they have constructed to try to suppress the consequences of sin in their society.

We have seen how Saul’s sin provoked the people to sin, and the people’s sin provoked Saul to sin. Saul disobeyed God’s commandments to appease his people, and God rejected him as king over Israel.

Saul and his people were entangled in their sin, showing the truth of God’s Word: “thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil,” and “evil associations corrupt good conduct.”

This real-life example of the sympathetic resonance between the sin of Israel and the sin of king Saul is a sharp contrast to our Lord Jesus’ interaction with His people!

Hebrews describes Jesus as “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” That doesn’t mean that Jesus separated Himself from His people, but rather that He was never polluted by the sin of His people whom He has saved.

The sins of the Lord’s people could not pollute Jesus, or tempt him to disobedience, or cause Him to stumble or morally besmirch Himself in any way.

It is crucial that we always keep in mind this stark distinction between our leaders and our Savior, between our earthly institutions and Jesus Christ.

We ultimately destroy, by our sin, our own institutions and leaders.

But we can never destroy, by our sin, our Blessed Redeemer!

There are numerous examples in Christ's earthly ministry that underline this point, both as to ceremonial uncleanness and moral impurity.

When a leper came to Jesus and worshiped Him, and said "If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," Jesus was moved with compassion, and touched the poor man, and replied "I will; be thou clean!"

Under the law of Moses, anyone who touched a leper was made unclean.

But not so with Jesus! Those whom He touched with healing power, were made clean instead! Jesus could heal unclean persons and not be polluted in any way. Instead, He purified them!

Who can forget the beautiful incident of the woman polluted by an issue of blood? In faith she touched the hem of Christ's garment, and was healed immediately.

Under the law, anyone and anything she touched would also be made unclean, but not our Lord Jesus. He could never be polluted by the touch of a poor helpless woman who trusted in Him. Rather than being made unclean Himself, Christ made this poor woman instantly clean, and healed her of her disease.

But Jesus was on the way to raise Jairus's daughter from her death bed. Touching a dead body also made a person unclean, but Jesus took the little girl's hand and told her to arise, and she did!

Rather than be made unclean Himself, our Jesus raised her from the dead!

The One Who made all things, and gives all things life, our Creator, our Redeemer, could not be paralyzed into inaction by leprosy, or a little blood, or even death itself. By His power, He makes clean what was polluted, makes whole what was diseased, and makes alive what was dead!

But this power of Christ went far further than healing physical pollution. Our King Jesus could not be rendered impure by His association with sinners. He could not be tempted to sin or fall into sin.

The Pharisees were incensed when Jesus received sinners, and ate with them. They believed that to do so somehow made Him morally and spiritually polluted. They believed that their good deeds and scrupulous separation from sin made them superior to the rest of society.

But Jesus rebuked them by referring to the duty and work of a physician. Sick people need a physician, not those who are well. Christ said, "I am come to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

And here we come to the greatest power and work of Christ: His people's sin could never pollute Him or make Him morally impure. On the contrary, Jesus takes away His people's sin!

Some might object, that when our sins were laid upon Jesus, surely that rendered Him morally impure somehow. After all, Paul wrote that Christ, Who knew no sin, was made sin for us!

Our sin was indeed laid upon Jesus. Our sin was imputed to Christ, and He was treated and judged as guilty in our place by God at the cross.

But Jesus was never morally polluted by our sin. That's because, unlike King Saul, Jesus never participated with us in committing any of our sin.

While Christ bore our sin in His Own body on the cross, Christ never did sin in Himself. He was guilty of our sin by imputation, but He never was a sinner.

And notice this great difference: Saul and his people were entangled in their sin, and dragged each other down into degradation and guilt and shame.

What did Paul conclude? That Jesus was made sin in our place, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him!

Christ's association with our sin at Calvary not only did not drag Him down into moral pollution with His people, but rather, He made His people righteousness in Him!

Rather than spreading around the depravity and moral shame, Jesus has cleansed His people of their sin, and laid upon them His Own righteousness in place of their shame and dishonor.

In Galatians 3, Paul describes how Jesus redeemed us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us.

He was subject to the judgment of the law at the hand of God and men, for our sins, and in our place, though He had done none of those crimes Himself.

The consequence is not that Jesus was polluted, but rather, that we are redeemed from the judgment we deserve.

Jesus paid the sin debt for His people.

The same transformative power of Christ bearing our sins at Calvary is described by Peter, and the consequence is, that we are now dead to sins, and alive unto righteousness.

All this was foretold by Isaiah the prophet, when he described how “God laid on Jesus the iniquities of us all.” It pleased God to crush His Own Son in death for our crimes, to make His soul an offering for our sin.

God is satisfied with the sin offering that Christ made for us. His justice against our sin is fulfilled and completed by Christ’s death for our sins. God’s Lamb has taken away our sins!

No wonder the Psalmist said of Christ, that God did not despise, or count as nothing, the afflictions of the afflicted Jesus! Rather, God holds Christ’s work of redemption in the highest regard, and it is precious to Him!

That’s because it satisfied God for the saving of His beloved, sinful people.

Here is a marked difference: Saul sinned, and was destroyed because of it, and he was rejected as king by God.

But Jesus’ taking away His people’s sin at Calvary is entirely acceptable to God, and well pleases Him!

Indeed, Paul writes that Christ’s offering for our sin is a “sweet smelling savor” unto God!

And because of that, Christ is highly exalted by God as our King!

Saul’s pollution by sin did no good for his people, and God removed him as king.

Christ’s punishment for our sins laid upon Him, saved His people forever, and God has confirmed Christ as our Good King Jesus for all eternity!