



This Sunday we started our new topical series at Magdalen Road, thinking about sin and how to solve it. Each week will look at a different passage outlining a different model or metaphor of sin in the bible, and each week, we will see how the cross is sufficient.

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We began by thinking about how important this topic is for us as Christians, because

- 1) Personal sin is largely **forgotten** in our society – people describe them as lifestyle choices rather than something ‘wrong or evil’ (though interestingly that category is still available for situations such as in Paris this last week). As culture becomes increasingly post-Christian, and God is removed from the agenda, so people are confused as to whether there is ‘right or wrong’ and where we draw those lines.
- 2) We forget sin at our peril though as it is **foundational** to the plotline of the bible, revealing God’s extraordinary love and grace in rescuing his people. Lose sin and we lose the cruciality of the cross.

This week we began by focusing in on the archetypal sin seen in Genesis 3, revealing a number of realities about the nature of sin which still affect us today.

1) Sin begins with doubting the truth about God’s word

The serpent begins the conversation with Eve by sowing seeds of **doubt** into her mind – the name he uses for God is not his personal covenant name, highlighting the distance between her and God. He then causes her to doubt that God wants the best for her – questioning and challenging God’s motives for laying down the law regarding trees. As well as doubt he simply **denies** the power and truth of God’s word.

2) Sin is faithlessness and rebellion against God

We see the faithlessness of this first sin in that God has provided generously for them all that they needed. He’s not a cruel tyrannical oppressive leader, but rather kind and generous. There is only one tree they may not eat from – one line drawn for their good, to show that they trust God and can obey him. As they’re faithlessness is seen, it works out in rebellion too. It may begin small but it’s rebellion nonetheless. And as we see here, often small sins end up with huge implications.

3) Sin is finally wanting to be like God

We noted that being like God is not intrinsically bad (we’re created in his image Gen 1v27 and are being made into the image Jesus (Ro 8v29), rather it’s defining how we are like God that is the issue. The root problem here seems to be wanting God’s role in being the

moral arbiter – defining right from wrong. It points to the desire we have to on the throne which lies behind sin “Every sin is an act of cosmic treason” (RC Sproul).

Adam and Eve failed the test and whole human race has been failing the same test ever since.

But Jesus deals with our sin

We compared 2 Adams and 2 Gardens. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve doubt God’s Word and his character, are faithless and rebellious and want to be like God. In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus trusts God’s word and his character, obeying him and rather than wanting to be like God (even though he had every right to) lowers himself for us (see Phil 2v6-8).

Naturally we are ‘in Adam’, but after the Garden of Gethsemane and the cross, we are in Christ. Because Jesus passes where Adam failed, so we don’t have to earn or strive to please God, but with his help can turn from sin and live for him in the new status that is ours.

Here are just a few questions that might get things going, please feel very free to ignore / adapt for your group:

How do you see sin being ‘forgotten’ in society. When is it still remembered?
Do you agree that sin is ‘foundational’ to the plotline of the bible?

How does Satan sow seeds of doubt for Eve? What does he want her to doubt?
Where does he simply deny God’s truth?
What should Eve have said in this encounter?
Where do these realities about sin work out in our lives?

Presumably he didn’t need to, so why do you think God put the tree in the Garden?
Where do we see Eve’s faithlessness here?
Where does our faithlessness work itself out in life?

Why did Eve finally eat the fruit?
In what was sin wanting to be like God?

Talk us through the parallels (and differences) between Jesus and Adam in Gethsemane and Eden?
What does it mean to be in Christ? How does that fuel us to live joyfully for him?

What do these verses tell us about the nature of God? Sin?
How do they help in your daily battle?
