

Mourning Over Sin

Since sin is real and can cost you your soul, how do you _____ to the guilt of your sins? Some _____ the consequences of sin and actually celebrate evil. What does God say? We're here to _____ the Scriptures for God's will. The Bible is an entirely practical book, dealing with our everyday lives and the attitudes of our _____. The Lord Jesus never speaks needlessly; we must know how to _____ our hearts and lives within the Father's will. The difference between following the Lord and not following the Lord is a difference between eternal _____ and eternal destruction. We must take God and our _____ seriously.

The Lord Jesus said, "Blessed are those who _____, for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). Most people think of this passage when they have _____ a loved one; but it may not be referring to this, but to mourning over _____. Certainly the loss of a loved one hurts deeply and needs comforting; but the Lord is here speaking about something _____ than death. You can suffer death and still have _____ of eternal life with the Lord in heaven. The apostle Paul referred to his potential death at the hands of Caesar that he said he had "the desire to _____ and to be with Christ, for that is very much better" (Philippians 1:23). Though we grieve for the loss of a loved one, we can _____ when a faithful Christian is with the Lord.

If, however, a person refuses to believe, refuses to repent of sin, or refuses to obey the Lord, he'll face eternity without the Lord and without His _____. In such cases we not only mourn our loss over a loved one, we also mourn for the fate of his _____. The Lord Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one _____ to the Father but through Me" (John 14:6).

Our reading today comes from the book of James 4:7-10. James is here talking about a group of people who unfortunately had made themselves _____ of the world, and became a little arrogant about it.

In every _____ people have forgotten God and rejoiced over wicked ways, ignoring the consequences of their sins. Some have hardened their _____ for so long they've forgotten the guilt, shame, and the harm that sin produces. Don't imagine that our _____ was the first to depart from the ways of God.

Before the flood found in the book of Genesis, it says, "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only _____ continually. So the LORD was _____ that He had made mankind on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart" (Genesis 6:5-6). Humanity had indeed corrupted its way on the earth with violence, so God determined to _____ them and had Noah to build an ark.

After the flood, God told Noah and his sons, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Genesis 9:1). Instead, the people gathered at Shinar and decided to _____ God. They said, "Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a _____, otherwise we'll be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4). At that time God confused their language, so that they couldn't understand each other and scattered them abroad over the face of all the _____.

Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.

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God used Moses to bring the people of Israel out of Egypt, to give them a _____, and establish them as a holy nation. As the centuries passed, the people _____ God and His laws. They began serving other _____. The prophet Jeremiah said: “Thus says the LORD, ‘What injustice did your fathers find in Me, That they went _____ from Me And walked after emptiness and became empty?’” (Jeremiah 2:5). We wonder about why people who call themselves Christian today have wandered far from God for an _____ way of life. Jeremiah 2:11-13 says, “‘My people have _____ their glory, For that which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this, And shudder, be very desolate,’ declares the LORD. ‘For My people have committed two evils: They have _____ Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns, That can hold no water.’”

In parts of ancient Israel, there were few springs and creeks, so the people _____ cisterns in strategic places to catch the rainwater during the rainy seasons. They would hollow out a place in the ground and seal it on the inside with a kind of plaster; but if there was even the slightest of earthquakes, or the plaster might crack, then the water would slowly _____ out. An empty cistern was _____.

Our society has forgotten God and gone our _____ ways. We’ve forgotten God’s _____ and deliberately mocked God with our confused and chaotic morality. Editing God’s ways and morals to suit ourselves is _____ beyond measure. When we imagine that we’re _____ than God, we’ll start drinking unclean water from a broken cistern.

Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet, because of the _____ of the people. He said in Jeremiah 9:1-3, “‘Oh that my head were waters, And my eyes a fountain of tears, That I might _____ day and night, For the slain of the daughter of my people! Oh that I had in the desert, A wayfarers’ lodging place; That I might _____ my people, And go from them! For all of them are adulterers, An assembly of treacherous men. They bend their tongue like their bow; Lies and not _____ prevail in the land; For they proceed from evil to evil, And do not _____ Me,’ declares the LORD.” Jeremiah prophesied and preached for forty years to Judah, but they didn’t _____ to God’s words that came through him. Jeremiah said, “‘But if you will not listen, my soul will weep in secret for your _____; my eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears, because the LORD’s flock has been taken captive” (Jeremiah 13:17). Sinful desires can not only enslave us, they can also _____ our hearts and drain out our faith and love for God. Psalm 119:136 says, “‘My eyes shed streams of tears, because people do not keep your _____.”

The New Testament also speaks of the _____ when people mourn over sin. Do you remember the parable of Jesus about the Pharisee and the tax-collector in Luke 18? The self-righteous Pharisee who prayed to _____ rather than to God did not see his need for God, but the _____ tax-collector knew that he needed God’s forgiveness. The Lord Jesus said, “‘But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the _____!’ I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18:13-14). God knows our hearts and He knows whether we have a heart that mourns our sin and _____ for righteousness.

Peter was a man who often spoke and acted before he thought, but He _____ the Lord and wanted to do right. That describes many of us. The Lord Jesus predicted that Peter would _____ Him three times in the night before He was crucified. Luke 22:55-62 tells what happened: “‘After they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter was sitting among them. And a servant-girl, seeing him as he sat in the firelight and looking intently at him, said, ‘This man was with Him too.’ But he _____ it, saying, ‘Woman, I don’t know Him.’ A little later, another saw him and

said, 'You're one of them too!' But Peter said, 'Man, I am not!' And after about an hour had passed, another man began to insist, saying, 'Certainly this man also was with Him, for he is a Galilean too.' But Peter said, 'Man, I don't _____ what you're talking about.' And immediately, while he was still speaking, a rooster crowed. The Lord turned and _____ at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had told him, 'Before a rooster crows today, you will deny Me three times.' And he went out and he _____ bitterly." Have you ever wept over your sins?

Some folks, instead of weeping, become indignant and act like sin doesn't really _____. Paul dealt with this in the church at Corinth. He said, "It's actually reported that there is immorality _____ you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's _____. You've become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who's done this deed would be removed from your midst" (1 Corinthians 5:1-2). They ignored the situation, they tolerated it, and even boasted about an incestuous sin that the _____ wouldn't even allow. Paul acted and he _____ the man in the presence of the church. He wouldn't _____ the church at Corinth to have fellowship with sexually immoral people. This apparently made the Corinthians stop and think about what they were doing. They needed to _____ of tolerating sin.

Paul wrote, "For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I don't regret it; though I did regret it—for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while—I now _____, not that you were made sorrowful, but you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the _____ of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a _____ without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces _____. For behold what earnestness this very thing, this _____ sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter" (2 Corinthians 7:8-11). When people remain unwilling to judge others' sins, even though they don't commit it themselves, they're _____ with wickedness not with God.

We tend to celebrate today's sinful _____ and forget what the Lord Jesus said. We also forget the Lord Jesus is coming again to _____ us all. One day the Lord will call us to give an _____ of our lives, and no one will be celebrating sin on that day. We should be like Moses. Hebrews 11:24-26 says, "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to _____ the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the _____." What matters to you? Do you count the fleeting pleasures of sin more valuable than a _____ in heaven?

There is a Day of Judgment coming, when the Lord Jesus will either reward or punish us according to the _____ that we've done in the body. Christians face a lot of animosity from those who do not know God or believe His teaching. Second Thessalonians 1:7-9 says to faithful Christians, "and to grant _____ to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not _____ the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of _____ destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might."

What should we do? James 4:7-10 says, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will _____ from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and _____ and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will

exalt you.” Let’s look into our hearts and consider our _____. Let’s be done with sin and draw _____ to God. Yes, we should mourn our sin; but God will comfort us.

Why does this matter? Remember the Lord’s words. The Lord Jesus said, “If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it’s _____ for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into _____. And if your right hand makes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it’s better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell” (Matthew 5:29-30). Being in sin is worse than losing an eye or hand, and it’s even worse than physical _____. You can die physically and still go to _____; but you can’t cherish sin and refuse to repent and enjoy eternal life. Only those who _____ from sin and walk in the light with the Lord can enter heaven. Revelation 14:13 says, “Blessed are the dead who _____ in the Lord from now on! ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘so that they may _____ from their labors, for their deeds follow with them.’” I can find no such _____ for those who are lost in sin. We can’t hold fast to our sins and presume that we are still in the _____ of God. We’re in great spiritual _____ without God. So let’s turn our hearts toward Him, repent of our sins, and draw close to Him.

The Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be _____.” God doesn’t want to _____ us in mourning for sin and not give us any hope of salvation. He wants to comfort us, and He does this by giving us _____ and by saving us from sin. Though our sinful ways plague us, we have hope in the _____ of Jesus Christ to cleanse us. The Lord God told Solomon, “if my people who are called by my name _____ themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will _____ from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14). You can find healing and comfort from God when you humble yourself, pray, seek the face of God, and _____ from your wicked ways.

We need to follow the Lord Jesus to do His will and do it His _____. There’s no _____ to heaven and righteousness except the Lord’s way. Don’t delight in the thinking or the practices of the _____, but turn your heart toward God and take up your cross to follow Jesus.

To be right with God, place your trust in the Lord Jesus as God’s Son and listen to His word. Turn from evils of sin and renounce them. Determine to live righteous lives and confess Jesus Christ before others. Be baptized into Christ; that’s how God causes you to become united with Christ, to be born again, and to be freed from sin (Romans 6:3-7). God washes you of your sins when you’re baptized, immersed in water, for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16). What are you waiting for? Turn to God in faith and fulfill His desire for you to know the truth and to be saved. There’s no better day than today.