



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

A Systematic Study of Bible Teachings (Dogmatics) Lesson 4.5 – The Doctrine of Human Beings and Sin

The Progress of Sin in Our Lives

The beginning of sin is a lack of trust in God. When Eve no longer trusted in the goodness of her Creator, she began to sin. Her unbelief led her into faulty thinking and she put the word of a serpent she did not know above the word of her Creator, who had blessed her in every way. How does it happen that people follow the Antichrist rather than the Christ? Paul explains: **“For this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness”** (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12). Instead of believing the truth, they follow their own desires to do wrong, and what follows is delusion.

James writes: **“Each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death”** (James 1:14-15). First come **“the lusts of the flesh”** and then **“fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind”** (Ephesians 2:3).

Once we no longer trust in God’s goodness but put our own desires above God, then we think of God as an enemy. Every sin is really a sin against God. David sinned against Uriah, Uriah’s wife Bathsheba, Joab, and the whole people of Israel by his sin of adultery and murder, but later he confessed to God: **“Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight”** (Psalm 51:4). Sin is never a minor matter. Isaiah says: **“Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear”** (Isaiah 59:2). Every sin is a slap in God’s face. **“There is no fear of God before his eyes, for he flatters himself in his own eyes”** (Psalm 36:1-2). God wants us to humble ourselves before Him, but when we sin, we are putting ourselves above Him.

“Love is the fulfillment of the law” (Romans 13:10), but every sin is a sin against love. What God wants from us is love for Him and love for our fellowman. But every sin involves putting ourselves above God and doing our own thing, rather than doing His will. This is not love, no matter how we try to rationalize our disobedience to God as love. **“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth”** (1 Corinthians 13:4-6). Sin is basically selfish and self-centered. It seeks its own welfare rather than seeking the welfare of anyone else, and it certainly does not seek the glory of God.

Questions

1. Where did Eve’s sin begin?
2. What is God’s judgment on those who refuse to believe the truth?
3. What are the three steps in man’s downfall, according to James?
4. In what way is every sin a sin against God?
5. How does God summarize His law?
6. If you remember the two tables of the law, list them here.
7. Give an example of someone defending his disobedience as love.