

WEEDS ARE NOT SIN!

Gabriel L. Mancino



Weeds may be a nuisance, a pity or a disgrace, but they are not sin nor sinful. Weeds *can be* due to human neglect. We *humans* are a different lot! Certain things, though not sinful in themselves, *can easily*—if not *surely*—lead a person into sin. Is this so important to know?

Sin is the “X Factor” that puts man at odds with God. It is only sin that sends people to Hell. It is man’s love of sin and enslavement to sin that breaks the heart of God. This is why Jesus was named Jesus! The angel, Gabriel, told Mary’s husband, Joseph, “*And you shall call His name ‘Jesus’ (meaning ‘Saviour’), for He shall save His people from their sins*” (Matt. 1:21).

God provides for our salvation through Christ and, therefore, demands that all sin must be abandoned, here and now. No genuine seeker would want it otherwise. Half-hearted or self-deceived “seekers” will never find Christ nor forgiveness of sin. To such people Jesus said, “*You shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins.*” (Jn. 8:21). Why? Because they wanted a Christ of their own making; a *customised* or *counterfeit* Christ, or a Christ of *convenience*. Some sins are *popularized*, *promoted* and *protected* world-wide. Yet, God promised through Jeremiah, “*You shall seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all of your heart!*” (Jer. 29:13). And the rest of the Bible says “Amen!” Yes, God accepts *ALL* sinners, but He does

not leave them in the same condition He finds them! All God-named sin must go.

Salvation from sin is not merely a “negative, getting-rid-of things.” It is also a *positive* entrance, not of *things*, but of a *Person*, and of His wonderful Holy Spirit! It is a *relationship*, a *reality* and a *recognition*. You belong to Someone else—the infinite, Creator God. Upon His entrance, He lives within you, speaks to you and guides you. He loved you, me and the rest of the world so much that He provided the only means of our individual and collective rescue (Jn. 3:16)...unconditionally.

The rescue *is* free, but conditional. The conditions are within everyone’s reach, though demanding. Satan and Self try to make the *cost* and *conditions* seem too much. It is *Satan* who is a **ruthless dictator!** The Bible says “*the way of transgressors is hard*”- (Prov. 13:15), and *that* is true, regardless of misleading appearances. God’s Gift and the benefits cannot be obtained by any other means.

Yes, all sin must be left behind. **Airports** forbid us to take certain items aboard a flight. **Their list is extensive and specific. No one is exempt**, for it only takes *one* to endanger *all* on that aircraft. Though you may not directly push a person to commit some “horrible” sin, yet your life may cause innumerable people to fail to take God, eternity and their soul seriously. If our life actually stimulates neglect of this matter, it then has a damning influence on all around us; infecting *them*, and by *them* infect *others*.

The “**WEED**” of Sin is to be uprooted...“*destroyed*” (Rom. 6:6) “*in this present world*” (Titus 2:12). One’s growth or maturity, alone, does not deal with the sin issue. *Death* does not cancel-out one’s sin, though it certainly

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SIN’S PAYDAY: The Bible refers to “*the wages of sin*” (Rom.6:23). People work for wages & should be paid, right? In this case, the wages are eternal damnation. The alternative to the well-earned wages, is an underserved Gift—salvation, provided by God. See Ezekiel 18 & 33 — The righteous are warned not to turn from righteousness to sin, or else they lose their salvation. The wicked are warned to turn from their sin so that they will *not* lose their soul in Hell. Both are warned. Both can turn; for good or for bad. God has no pleasure that any die in sin & go to Hell. He wants *ALL* to be saved! Read it.

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THE EMPTY HOUSE

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One of the strangest stories Jesus ever told was of a haunted house. It is found in Luke 11: 24-26 and Matt. 12: 43-45. The house was not a *building* but a *man*, and it was not a *ghost* that haunted the man, but an *evil spirit*.

God intends for us to be “temples” of His Holy Spirit (1 Cor.3:16,17; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph.2:22). The Spirit of God wants full residency in our hearts. But Jesus told of a man in whom an *evil spirit* had taken up residency. This man’s body, instead of being a dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit,

became the abode of an evil spirit.

The evil spirit that had been living with the man suddenly decided to depart, leaving the man alone. It wandered about in desert places, seeking rest and finding none. It had no house, no home, no dwelling-place. In its restlessness it said to itself, “*I will return into my house from where I came out.*” And so it did. It went right back to the man it had left and, looking into the man’s heart, it saw that his heart was empty. No one dwelt there. His life was swept bare. There seemed to be no spirit, either good or bad, there. That evil spirit, therefore, got seven other evil spirits more evil than itself, and they entered and made *him* their home. As a result, the man was seven times worse off than he was before the evil spirit departed from him.

Did those evil spirits have names?

How often have we seen the evil spirits of pride, lying, envy, profanity, hatred, anger and selfishness! *Right there* are

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“**THE NARROW WAY:**” Our eldest daughter, while at The Purcell School, played trumpet, piano, flute & bassoon. In time, she was told to eliminate the last two, as they hindered perfecting of her No.1 instrument: the trumpet. I loved her flute-playing, but she had to *Narrow Things Down* to excel. *Narrowing Down* is common, isn’t it? Then, “Bravo!” to those who apply intense focus on the most important things of all: the welfare of their soul, their destination in eternity and their whole-hearted desire to love and obey God in this present life! Jesus spoke of “*The Narrow Way*”- (Matt.7:13, 14; Lk.13:24ff). Christ’s “*Narrow Way*” is not “*narrow-minded*.” God’s love for the world is immeasurably broad; certainly not narrow (John 3:16)! To truly know God & walk with Him requires focus. Yes, focus all of your *daily* life...& give Christ “*First Place!*” Christ’s Way *IS* “*Narrow*,” but *NOTHING ON EARTH* surpasses or equals it. “*Second Place*” doesn’t exist.

THE EMPTY HOUSE

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seven evil spirits that might have come to live in that man. Greed, violence and lust are three other evil spirits that may have been lurking nearby. He was not one man with a *good* spirit; he was a man with eight *evil* spirits.

Jesus told this strange story to remind us that evil is all about us, knocking at our door, seeking to live with us, to make its home with us. We can let it in and keep it there, or we can send it off about its business, telling the evil spirit: "Be gone!" Yet to do *even this* is not enough! Satan and his demons are very deceptive, and so is the human heart! (See Jer. 17:9.)

An empty house is an open invitation for some one to enter. Where there is emptiness there is often danger. If there is an empty head, hand, or heart, then all forms of evil will come trying to crowd in.

Of course, a **full house** means no room for another to enter, and if *God* is on the *outside*, that is bad news! If we would be safe, we must see that our hands and hearts and heads are not *empty* but *full*... yet full of *what*? Many people are too "full" with work, education, plus all sorts of diversions to detect that they are targets or victims of evil spirits. They keep (or are kept) busy, and therefore, often sense little or no presence of evil in their personal lives.

The way to put the evil spirit *out* is to let the Holy Spirit *in*. We keep the cold out, by turning on the heat. We keep darkness out by turning on a light. If we wish to keep the evil out, we keep letting in the good. For this reason we should fill our minds and hearts with things such as the Bible says: "Whatever things are true...honourable...just...pure...lovely...of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things...and the God of peace will be with you." (Phil. 4: 8, 9).

Jesus is knocking at our door, saying, "if any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in" (Rev. 3:20). Without letting Him in, no human is safe and no

heart is satisfied. The Bible invites us all to "taste and see that the Lord is good!" (Ps. 34:8). Christ's illustration of the "**haunted house**" teaches an actual reality that has both *present* and *eternal* consequences.

Only Christ and His Spirit can keep evil spirits from finally taking us to dwell with them and their master, Satan, forever. Man has evil already "at home" within. Evil spirits do or allow whatever is necessary to give the impression they do not exist! Yet they are "at home" in people who fail to have Christ to enter, pardon, cleanse and carry on His work within. Purposely and wilfully invite Christ in. Cooperate with Him. Submit your all to Him. Be clear, specific and definite about it. Then, after *this* life is over, Christ will say "**Well done, good and faithful servant...enter into the joy of your Lord!**" (Matt. 25: 21, 23). **HOME AT LAST!**

TOUCHING THE ARK

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means of union with His people were both fulfilled and *filled-full* in Jesus Christ. He is God's provided "**ark of safety**" for all mankind. He is our Prophet, Priest and King. In Him was all the fullness of God bodily (Col. 2:9 with Heb. 1:1-6). *Through Him*, we are enabled to have access to "*all the fullness of God!*" (Eph. 3:19), and God will do it, even beyond our comprehension! (v.20). But we can never hope to enjoy this by staying away! We must come... constantly, openly and boldly. In fact, we must simply enter in and live there! (Jn. 15). We need not fear to touch this Ark, for, referring to Jesus, John says "*we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life...and bear witness, and show to you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us; That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*"- (1 Jn. 1: 1-3). "**For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us**" (2 Cor. 1:20).

**TOUCH, TAKE, TASTE & TELL!
KNOW HIM/SHARE HIM...PERSONALLY!**



TOUCHING THE ARK

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NOAH'S ARK

Most people have heard of "Noah's Ark," or seen a movie or book about it, or a model of it with **all sorts of animals**. Noah was **building** that ark **for 120 years**. People lived much longer then. No doubt, others saw him building it with his sons. Some may have even helped. Some may have leaned on the ark as they talked. Some may have peeked inside or even gone in for a little walk-around. Yet no one, other than **Noah's family**, entered that ark and stayed. Jesus ended telling of that historic event by saying "*and they did not know until the Flood came and took them all away.*" (Matt. 24:39).

THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

"**Leave it! Leave it!**" Those were the snappy words of a visiting boy nearby when we were all youngsters. His really nice model airplane had just landed and he didn't want us breaking it. God had Moses to have a special "box" made which was called "the ark of the covenant." It held certain sacred items, and represented "the presence of God." **Only specified persons were to touch it.** Anyone else would die; and one man *did*! They were carrying it wrongly, and when the ox stumbled, the cart shook and the man thought he needed to stabilize it by hand. Wrong! (2 Sam. 6) It is easy to accuse God of being cruel. God gave us brains, and today's brainy world needs to take God more seriously, and know that He means what He says.

GOD'S ARK OF PROMISES, PARDON, PURITY, PRESENCE & PROTECTION

Many of the things God instituted by Moses were only for a time, and were God-intended sign-posts pointing to "Better Things," as the New Testament Book called "Hebrews" is well-nicknamed. The entire bouquet of things that God had begun as a

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stops one from further sinning in this world. The Bible clearly does **NOT** teach "reincarnation" (Heb. 9:27). We have only one life-time in which to get right with God, as the man in Lk. 16:19-31 found out...too late.

Man is incapable, by any means, of purchasing his own salvation. One old song says this very well:

**"Could my tears forever flow,
Could my zeal no languor know,
These for sin could not atone,
You must save, and You alone.
In my hand no price I bring;
Simply to Your cross I cling.**

God leads those who would love Him *supremely*, listen *closely*, act *quickly* and continue *unswervingly*.

WEEDS may have only begun to grow as part of the "curse" after Adam and Eve sinned in The Garden of Eden. We know that there was some "forbidden fruit," even in that Paradise! Yet, in some special way, God "walked" with Adam there (Gen. 3:8). I believe it was some very real, personal and close union of Man and God, that is, until sin ruined it. **SIN, the worst WEED of all!** But wait! Let's imagine God has given you a new Garden of Eden. I invite you to welcome God to walk *with* you, and in a sense, walk *IN* you; that you may have the closest fellowship imaginable. Say Good-bye to sin. **NO MORE WEEDS!**

SIN'S SETBACK

Sin is the greatest power in this fallen world! Jesus came to destroy that power via the Cross where Satan, his package, powers & pals were openly defeated (Col. 2:13-15; 1Jn. 3:8). Satan had the power of death, so Jesus' death sets fear-filled man free! (Heb. 2:14,15 cf. Lk. 1:74, 75). It is **SIN** that brought death into this world, and **SIN**, alone, sends people to Hell. Sin and Satan will *forever* cease destroying, only *after* this *present* world finishes (Heb. 2: 8 etc!.) Yet, even where sin is overflowing in today's world, God's grace is "overflowingly" available even more!! (Rom. 5:20; Lk. 7:47). Sin has a setback, even here and now! **YES!!**

We meet at Christ Church on the corner of Brent Street and Heriot Road in Hendon (NW4) at 5:45 pm Sundays. Nearest Tube: Hendon Central.