

The Way Out of Sin

Welcome/Prayer

Foreword

Our study on the book of Exodus has revealed the historical record of the Israelites' escape from Egyptian captivity. Yet, after they were freed from slavery in Egypt, they found themselves in a different type of bondage, one caused by their disobedience and rebellion. They needed a way out of sin, and God provided it. As we look at the scriptures for today's message, we'll see that the world's perspective on sin (Aaron's) keeps us in bondage, while God's way (spoken through Moses) leads to true freedom...and to *the way out*.

Introduction

We're looking at Chapter 32 of the book of Exodus for this lesson, where we find the Israelites encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai. Moses, their leader, has been meeting with the Lord at the top of the mountain, and there's been no sight of him for 40 days and nights. Accordingly, the Israelites are growing so impatient that it gets the better of them, and they allow idolatry and sin to overtake their judgment. Whenever we choose to do our own thing and live in contrast to the Lord's will, we find ourselves enslaved by sin. So, like the ancient people of God, we must find a way out of sin.

1. What are some of the idols or "gods" in your life that get most of your attention and perhaps even your devotion?
2. How do those affect your relationship with God?
3. Consider someone you idolize. How do the characteristics of that person compare or contrast to what you know about God?

Preparation

Read the following text related to today's message:

Exodus 32:1-4 (NLT)

When the people saw how long it was taking Moses to come back down the mountain, they gathered around Aaron. "Come on," they said, "make us some gods who can lead us. We don't know what happened to this fellow Moses, who brought us here from the land of Egypt." ² So Aaron said, "Take the gold rings from the ears of your wives and sons and daughters, and bring them to me." ³ All the people took the gold rings from their ears and brought them to Aaron. ⁴ Then Aaron took the gold, melted it down, and molded it into the shape of a calf. When the people saw it, they exclaimed, "O Israel, these are the gods who brought you out of the land of Egypt!"

Exodus 32: 21-24 (NLT)

²¹ Finally, [Moses] turned to Aaron and demanded, "What did these people do to you to make you bring such terrible sin upon them?" ²² "Don't get so upset, my lord," Aaron replied. "You yourself know how evil these people are." ²³ They said to me, 'Make us gods who will lead us. We don't know what happened to this fellow Moses, who brought us here from the land of Egypt.' ²⁴ So I told them, 'Whoever has gold jewelry, take it off.' When they brought it to me, I simply threw it into the fire—and out came this calf!"

Exodus 32: 30-32a (NIV)

³⁰ The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." ³¹ So Moses went back to the Lord and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold." ³² But now, please forgive their sin....

Break it Down

The Israelites committed a terrible sin. Every one of us has “sinned a great sin” in God’s eyes, and it brings serious, and even deadly, consequences. Whenever we choose to do our own thing and live contrary to the Lord’s will, we find ourselves enslaved by sin, and we must find a way out of it. The “exodus” from sin is revealed in the conversation between Moses and his brother, Aaron, albeit through very different perspectives.

The World’s Way of Dealing with Sin (Aaron’s perspective)

(1) “It’s no big deal” (v. 22a)

Aaron downplayed the seriousness of what had happened. We are guilty of this, too, especially as it relates to our own sin. The problem with this approach is that it’s contrary to God’s Word. Jesus made it clear, “If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off. If your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out.” (Mark 9:43-47 paraphrased).

1. What are some ways we tend to downplay our own sin behavior?
2. Discuss some sins that people in our culture consider to be "no big deal."
3. When have you ever experienced serious consequences for violating one of God's commands? What did you learn from the experience?

(2) “The blame game” (vv. 22b-23a)

Our human tendency since the beginning of time is to “pass the buck” when it comes to sin (e.g., Adam and Eve). While it may seem like an automatic response when we get caught in or confronted with our sin, blaming others aligns us with the way of the world, and we remain in sin’s grip.

1. Describe a time you blamed someone else for a sin you committed; or, share about a time when someone else shifted the blame shifted onto you.
2. What are some ways in which people today blame others for their problems or refuse to accept responsibility for their actions?

(3) “The whopper” (v. 24b)

When all else failed, Aaron resorted to lying—he told a “whopper.” While Aaron’s whopper may demonstrate his creative thinking skills, lying is not the way out of sin. Freedom comes only by seeing sin as God does and reacting to it accordingly.

1. When have you told—or been told—a "whopper?" What was it about, and what happened?
2. What are some "white lies" we tell to cover up our sinful behavior?

God’s Way of Dealing with Sin (via Moses’ perspective)

(1) Confess (v. 30a)

The first step toward the way out of sin is to admit guilt. The Bible calls this “confession.” Confession is a virtue which God rewards. To find the way out of sin, take ownership of your transgressions, acknowledge that you have violated God’s will, and then follow what Moses did next....

1. Why is it so hard to confess our wrongdoing?
2. When have you experienced that "confession is good for the soul?"

(2) Repent (vv. 31-32a)

After acknowledging that a sin against God had been committed, Moses turned to God and sought His forgiveness. The Bible calls this “repentance” (turning from sin, turning to God). The way out of sin is recognizing that we need God’s mercy and forgiveness and then actively seeking it through confession and repentance.

1. What is the difference between "being sorry" and "repenting?"
2. Describe a time when you were granted mercy when you really deserved justice.

(3) Trust (v. 30b)

Despite his intentions, Moses could not make things right between God and His people. He was a sinner, too (e.g., murderer, disobedient), so he could not atone for their sins...in the same way that we cannot atone for our own. Only the One who was without sin—Jesus, God's Son—could (and did) pay the price for the sins of the world by sacrificially giving His life on our behalf.

1. What are some ways in which we try to atone for our sins and misdeeds?
2. What does it mean to "believe" in Jesus?

Conclusion

Jesus did for us what we could never do ourselves—He provided a way out of sin. The cross is a symbol, not just of His sacrifice, but of our freedom from sin and the death and destruction it causes. By believing in Jesus and His saving work, we are loosed from the bondage of sin. Simply, JESUS is the WAY out of sin. Now is the time to thank God for His forgiveness and for providing the Way out of sin. Confess, repent, and trust Jesus to save you from your sins.

Close in Prayer