

General Consideration

Good morning to all and as we continue our discussion on the subject of Christian holiness, we will now change gears. We have been discussing for quite some time the subject of sin at its heaviest or at its most severe condition. I accommodated the word addiction, although I have problems with it as such, but I accommodated it and so we call the severe, the most severe

issue of sin to be that of habit and addiction to some. But now we change gears and go to the other extreme, those sins that we tend to treat as lethal and because we tend to treat them as lethal, we may tend to make life of them.

So, this necessitates some review. Way, way back, we began our consideration of holiness with the subject that we call or the Bible calls mortification. That's the old term in the King James version of what is more, better translated as put to death. That is our goal for every sin. Not that we can obtain it in this life, but that remains our goal, that of mortification. So, remember that we will be holy. It's not just some kind of ideal of being religious and attending church and doing duties. Christian holiness requires mortification of all sins. And of course, the opposite and corresponding process is cultivation of graces. Now mortification means mortification of specific sins. You do not just say to yourself, I am mortifying my sin. You must specify what sin you are mortifying. This is the very reason why in our lesson and the reason why this lesson has been prolonged for a good number of lessons now is because we specified sins and we need to specify what sins you are mortifying and like to call it like a project. You have a project of mortifying a sin that probably is bothering you or something that is hindering your Christian holiness. You must specify it. But at the same time, if you are serious with mortification, mortification must deal with the occasions of sin. So what are those occasions that provoke you to that sin? The occasion itself may not be sinful, but to you it is a provocation to your sin. So this may vary from Christian to Christian. You do not impose on another Christian to whom something is not an occasion of sin, but to you it is an occasion and you need to avoid it. He may not need to avoid it, but seriousness means that you take seriously not only the specific sin, but the occasion that leads to that particular sin and serious holiness therefore, which is imperative mortification must not skip any sin. That's the point when I said perfection is not attainable, but pursuable, which means we pursue perfection. We do not look at a particular sin in our lives and say that's too little to bother about. There is no way you can skip any sin. 2 Corinthians chapter 7 and verse 1 makes it clear. Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves. Now take note from every defilement

and in order to not misinterpret this, Paul even adds every defilement of body and spirit. So whether internal or external and the result is bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. So cleansing ourselves includes every defilement and every sin is a defilement whether internally or externally. So we therefore conclude that we must not skip, but what sort of sins do we skip? On the one hand, what we just studied in our previous section is we skip what we feel helpless to overcome. We tend to skip it. So we just skip it and that's just what we studied. Those sins that have become a habit, perhaps an addiction, we would tend to skip it. I hope we have dealt with that quite systematically. Now the other

kind of sins that we tend to skip is we skip those sins that we think only are little sins. So it's this second type of sins that we will now focus upon in this section. Those that we tend to skip because we think they are lethal sins. So we therefore spell out the issue very clearly. What is the issue here is are there, you will know that I always put the word lethal in quotations, which means that that is how people describe these sins. I do not accept it. That is not biblical as I shall show, but let us just use the word, but while putting it in quotation. Are there little sins that we may just take lightly and not seek to mortify? Now we can commit to errors here and I need to emphasize and underscore because both will have a wrong direction if taken seriously. The first error is sometimes held by those who are serious about sin and they say that all sins are just the same before God. So in other words, there really are no differences of sins. So they will say there are no lethal sins, which is good, but they say there are no comparative gravity of sins. And by saying that they think they are being biblical because that will make you take seriously every sin. But that actually isn't biblical for one, the Bible, the scriptures make valuation of the gravity of sin. We can speak of sin from bad to worse. And I will mention later or we will cite later Luke 12, 47 and 48. And the direction of this error is to make no comparative gravity of sin will encourage acts worse than the thought. You know, somebody might be thinking a sinful thought. There's no difference between my thought and then putting it into action. And by putting it into action, he actually does something worse than just if it were a thought. Just to cite an example, a person may have lustful thoughts and those lustful thoughts are sinful and must be taken seriously. But if he is taught this way, that whatever you do, no difference of sin. And therefore he might think, well, because I struggle with my thought and then I can just put it into action, whether molesting a woman or doing another activity that is sinful. He doesn't realize that the activity makes his case worse than just struggling with a thought. So this is the direction of this error. Thinking to make you serious about everything, but it does lead you to more serious sins by making no differentiation. So that's one error. But the second error is the Roman Catholic position that classify sins as mortal sins and venial sins. Thomas Aquinas of the Middle Ages popularized this. So he spoke of the seven cardinal sins and the seven cardinal virtues and those cardinal sins would be the mortal sins. And the way they differentiate this is to say that venial sins are those sins which if unconfessed and when you die, your soul goes to purgatory. Of course, the very idea of purgatory is false. It's not biblical. It's not in the scripture. And in fact, historically, it spawned the reformation of the 16th century because of the selling of indulgences by the Roman Catholics using purgatory as they come on. If you give your if you buy indulgences, these are certificates signed by the Pope that will certify the deliverance of their relatives, the souls of their relatives in purgatory from purgatory. So they say once the coin on the coffee rings, the soul from purgatory springs. So attracted by that, many bought the indulgences. Martin Luther heard of it and he hit him hard and then posted the 95 thesis and the rest they say is history. So we do not believe that there are sins that we can categorize as venial that leads you to that will lead you to purgatory. We do not even believe in purgatory. And then there are mortal sins in this classification. Mortal sins are those unconfessed sins that when you die, will bring you to hell.

And of course, also that is wrong. If we have to make that classification, we will say this, all sins are mortal. And by that the Bible makes it clear, Romans 6 23, the penalty of sin is death. So every sin is mortal. Ezekiel 18 4, the soul that sins, it shall die. So there is death, which is not just death physically, it includes that, but it also means eternal death in the, which the book of Revelation calls the second death of eternal punishment. So these are errors in answering the question, are there sins that are lethal? It is wrong not to classify and it is wrong rather not to make comparative gravity, but it is also wrong to classify into venial and mortal sins. Rather, we should think of the fact that there are degrees of gravity of sins. And we say that because the Bible makes comparison of sins. Some sins are worse, some sinners are worse. This is what Jesus himself told Pilate during the confrontation when Pilate was asking and Jesus answered, you could have no power at all against me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore, take note the one who delivered me to you has the greater sin. So it speaks of the greater, Pilate was sinning in becoming instrumental to the unjust death of Jesus, but Jesus is pointing out the one who delivered me to you is of greater sinfulness. So that's a comparative term. Whether he's referring to Judas or to the Jews doesn't matter at this point, it is immaterial at this point. The point is that Jesus recognizes that there are sinners who are greater in their sinfulness than others and Pilate as bad as he was, Jesus still sees others as worse than a pilot that reveals gravity of sins. And then therefore that tells us to maintain these degrees of gravity of sins. So that brings us to what Luke 12, 47 and 48 says, that servant who knew his master's will but did not get ready or act according to his will, will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know indeed what deserved a beating will receive a light beating. So you have a sin deserving heavier beating than that sin which deserves a less beating than the one who knew. The difference that is made here is one knew, the other did not. Now we'll take that as one of the ways to determine degrees of sin but here we conclude that maintaining comparative gravity and that is something that we should do, however does not mean that we belittle any sin. There is a degree, there are degrees of gravity of sin but that does not lead to the conclusion, therefore some sins are to be treated as lethal. So how then do we determine the degrees of gravity of sins? Well the first way is degrees measured by knowledge and that's the one that's obvious in Luke 12, 47 and 48. What differentiated the one deserving heavier beating from one who deserved less is knowledge. So one sin can be measured in degree of gravity by the knowledge that he possesses. So one sin can be intentional, another is unintentional. That is he did not know that it was sinful but he did it, that does not extenuate his sin. The other knew from the very beginning that it was sinful and did it anyway and that is intentional sin. Even in the Mosaic law such distinction is made concerning the person who sins and thus what is forbidden in any of the Lord's command. Now even though he does not know it, he is guilty and will be held responsible. So even ignorance does not extenuate from sin. It's still sin, it's still guilty, the person is still guilty and it demands in the Mosaic law a sacrifice for his sin but here in Numbers 15, 30, anyone who sins defiantly or intentionally or in the other translations with a high hand, you know when people protest and they raise their hand and in protest as their gesture, this is what is being portrayed here. A person who defies the authority of God whether native born or alien blasphemes the Lord and that person must be cut off from his people. Here

it is obvious that while both are counted as sin, it is obvious that intentional sinning is treated as worse and why is it intentional? Because he has previous knowledge. Sometimes we deal with immature Christians who probably had a habit before their conversion that they keep doing and because they're untaught and now you have taught him while he was doing it, untaught, he was still sinning but it was a sin of ignorance and the one who has been taught and now knows and still does it, thus now becomes guilty of intentional sin and that is treated as heavier. One thing that we see here is that the mitigating factor of ignorance. Remember the words of Jesus on the cross, Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing and he's probably referring to the Roman soldiers who were doing all those things to him and their ignorance is something that had a mitigating factor to the sin. But in saying that, let me clarify this does not include, this does not count what is called in the Bible willful ignorance, is what Peter says in 2 Peter chapter 3 and verse 5, this they willingly are ignorant of that by the word of God etc. So these are people who have the word of God but because of their willful rejection, either rejection or laziness to study the word even though they have the time to study the word and to determine what is right and what is wrong, they just feel comfortable with their ignorance and they keep being ignorant when they can grow from that ignorance. Now that's willful ignorance that is not a mitigating factor so that is something that we need to realize. And in contrast with sin of ignorance there is the sin of presumption of greater gravity will be that of presumption that makes the sin worse. By presumption we mean the person knows already that it is sinful but he does it anyway and he may have various presumptions it's not too much to do it or God knows that I'm a sinner still and therefore I can do it or that after I do it I will confess my sin. He may have a host of reasons to presume but what the bottom line is, he is doing something that he knows is sinful and that becomes presumptuous and don't say that Christians will never be guilty of presumptuous sin that is presumptuous. That is something that you know you and I know from our experience is not the case. How many times have we done something out of convenience or in order to save face but we know we are sinning in doing so and that is something that we need to understand. So we must realize that hearing of the presumptuous sins, hearing the gospel adds culpability to unbelief. A person in unbelief because of ignorance is in the realm of sin and as I was preaching this morning under the rule of Satan but when you hear the gospel and you keep on rejecting that gospel, Jesus puts it quite strongly and sharply in Matthew 10 verse 15, it will be more tolerable or bearable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town and that town is referring to the place of Capernaum and other cities which will have heard the gospel from the disciples and Jesus says if they die in unrepentant condition they will be worse off and he must be referring here to their condition in punishment and he says he mentions a worst case scenario of Sodom and Gomorrah. When you hear Sodom and Gomorrah what do you think, what comes to your mind? America, I mean that's the counterpart today but Sodom and Gomorrah is a portrait of decadence, immorality and yet Jesus is saying even an immoral decadency like Sodom will even have it more tolerable on the day of judgment than a city that has heard the gospel and has not repented. So that shows something worse and

then also knowing God's judgment deserves greater judgment and that's the Romans 1 32, though they know God's righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. So in other words they know the judgment of God but they do it anyway as though defying the threat of judgment. So in all of this what we see is that knowledge is favored but with commensurate responsibility but together with the favor you have a heavier responsibility. So we need to know more, we want to know more but if you know more you must take the responsibility that that knowledge gives to you. So there are degrees of gravity of sins dictated by knowledge. Then the second form of measuring degrees are degrees measured by action that is from inside to outside defilement. In mark 7 20 following what comes out of a man this is Jesus speaking is what makes him unclean for from within out of men's hearts come evil thoughts. So he begins with thoughts but then evil thoughts progress to actual commission of those sins in sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery. Now he concludes in verse 23 all these evils come from inside and make a man unclean. In other words there is a progress in sin from within the thought then it becomes more defiling as it gets out. The thought is already sinful it is already defilement so you don't belittle your thought that is sinful. Just to take the conclusion from this is that thoughts and attitudes are already sinful and Jesus made it clear hating is already a transgression of the commandment you shall not kill. Looking lustfully he said is already a transgression of the seventh commandment not to commit adultery but in thought but when that progresses to action that is even worse actual deeds are worse sins. So for example from the hearts condition that is your attitude to a person and then it spills over into speech becoming a speech what you think which is evil makes it worse. That's why I think I said in the previous lesson those who say well I am an honest person a frank person I speak my mind no don't speak your mind think with your mind you think with your mind and when you think with your mind you will realize there are certain thoughts you should not speak but when you speak it that makes it worse. So now that includes other materials that feed your thoughts like reading materials that are already words that feed your thoughts to make those thoughts be more confirmed in their sinfulness that makes it worse than just let's say injected thoughts or from lust to fornication. So Paul is saying that the person who commits sexual immorality is becoming one with that person and that is something that should be a description of marriage but when it spills over into actual deed with someone who is not a within marriage then it becomes fornication and that is worse than just lustful thought. Now again I'm not saying lustful thoughts are to be skipped I'm just saying that becoming deeds make it makes it worse so mortification does not stop with cessation of action we begin with the thoughts we try to mortify the thoughts you will not mortify sin unless you mortify it in your thoughts so were helpless about our sin have you dealt with your thoughts because if you do not shape your thoughts according to biblical agenda you will really find certain sins to be dominating in your life so that is those are degrees measured by action and then the final way of measuring is degrees measured by harm and that is harm that progresses from self-harm to damning harm of others so there is self-harm self-harm is wrong and contrary to self-nurture Ephesians 5 29 says that we are to so nurture ourselves no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes cherishes it just as Christ does

the church so self-care is compared by Christ caring for his church so to hurt yourself to harm yourself until the worst kind of it in suicide is wrong and it is a sin of self-harm but then to harm to cause harm on another wrongfully is worse in terms of this harming of others Jesus said woe to the world for temptations to sin it is necessary the temptations come but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes so you are now harming others you are

becoming a cause of temptations and stumbling to others that is worse than self-harm then even worse is to kill wrongfully another person is the most irreparable damage so damaging it is that the the word of God prior to the Mosaic law I must point that out this is part of the Noahic covenant which is a covenant for all humanity the human community not just Israel there are those who will say that the death penalty is just Israel Israel's law this is Genesis 9 God's covenant with Noah that embraces all humanity which says that if anyone takes life his life is forfeited that's the way remember the judgment of God before the flood why the flood was caused by God was this is nothing but violence now as a restraint to violence in the human community God has instituted the death penalty and the death penalty is uncompromising when we come to the Mosaic law it is uncompromising when it comes to the murderer other capital offenses there was a provision of ransom you can run some what we call today blood money but for the murderer there is to be no ransom and if we only apply this in our just justice system it would have been much better in terms of restraining violence it will not wipe out violence but it will restrain violence if only this has been followed but today's ideology of many disagrees with the death penalty and I'm a believer in the death penalty because murder is the most irreparable damage that can be done but the worst harm that one can do is to deceive to the domination of the soul this is the worst harm that can be done and Jesus makes it clear in his walls on the scribes and Pharisees wrote to you he says in Matthew 23 14 scribes and Pharisees hypocrites for you devour widows houses and for a pretense make long prayers you will receive greater condemnation and then he says earlier you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces for you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in in other words they prevent the possible salvation of some who are close to the kingdom of Christ the rule of Christ and they become the preventive factor that is the worst kind so one thing that we should conclude from this is that the gravity of offense is proportion to the favor of the offender we conclude from all these degrees more knowledge gravers in greater sin then in terms of making it an action your you have the possibility of acting it out or you have relationships you have access to and those are favors of God if you make use of those favors in a way that would commit sin that also adds to the greater offense but from all this you must conclude that that does not make it something that make any sins lethal there are no lethal sins there is a comparative gravity of sins but there are no lethal sins first because every sin has the potential to grow worse and so being mallet longan indian manana telling mallet quote unquote it always has the seed like a seed that will germinate it will grow worse a good example is peter earlier he said to jesus even if everyone will turn away i will not i will give my life for you and jesus told him that before the the rooster cross twice you will deny me three times and that should have been a warning to peter but instead what did he do one thing to prove to himself that he was not like the other disciples who fled so he came close to the occasion

so when she was when he was confronted he denied when he was confronted a second time he even drew from his old vocabulary of his old life and started cursing just to prove he's not of this man this is the man who will give his life for jesus and it grew worse so what that shows is that what begins as a thought grows into an attitude that will then become an action that's what happened to peter and the point why this is heavier is what is not mortified at its seed which is in thought becomes harder to cut when full-grown and then there is also the fact that sin is often clustered with other sins the simple point is that sin does not remain singular and a case in point here is that of david's adultery where did david's sin begin not the watching the idleness he was supposed to lead the battle because that's the way the narrator of samuel began the narrative of his adultery with bachiba he began by saying in those days when kings led the battle david remained in his palace so idleness and when you're idle you know what they say idleness is the devil's workshop and so uh idle whiling away his time and he then committed this act in the visual level at last on the visual level but because he has the power he exercised that power call that woman and then complications began she got pregnant so he tried to cover it up call the husband and he made the husband drunk and now go to your wife and he suggested to have intimacy of course you know that his purpose is to cover up the sin but he did not count on uraya having more integrity than david himself had and uraya said why would i enjoy that when my comrades are there dying in battle why would have why would i have that kind of privilege he tried again same answer and so what did it lead to a plot to murder uraya idleness lethal sin then visual adultery actual adultery uh cover up murder uh with what tells it tells us is that sin does not stay singular it will need a cover up of other sins remember john milton in his paradise lost what tangled web we weave when once we begin to deceive

so what is not mortified as a single sin will be harder to mortify when they become a cluster of sins and then finally you must remember that whatever sin it is it is a violation of god's holiness and therefore of christian holiness

we it is said of god he is of purer eyes than to behold evil he cannot tolerate sin in any form and that should also be reflected in our holiness and in our we're dealing with sin uh first john 1 7 says if you walk in the light as he is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of jesus his son cleanses us from all sin we call it justification

god

it will cut off our fellowship with him if we remain living a life that has unconfessed sin that is the reason why confession has to be daily because it has to be all sin whether sought or action so let this be the conclusion here that every sin while comparative in gravity is serious enough still for mortification every sin so what's the right thought for us the right thought is yes there is a standard of holiness that reflects comparative gravity of sins and we use that to help us know the status of my sins when you are mortifying your sin what is my sin now is it in my thought or is it now speeding over into speech into action into something worse so use the reality of gravity of sins to know the status of your sins and that will lead to the result i will not treat any any sin as lethal for every sin is a potential threat to my sanctification it remember the word use is defiling it is defiling wrong thought because of remaining sin may think the comparative gravity of sins

comforts to know that my sins are not that bad they are too little to be very serious about and that will lead to the habit i will just accept that my sins have to be taken lightly as long as they do not become grievous so the challenge here is let the truth of the degrees of sin lead you to treat every sin seriously in the age of in my gravity i think about the do my thing doing so worse gravity therefore i can believe that my sin that's not the point the point is to know where your sin is at and to already begin the process of mortification now let me just announce from this that these are the following quote unquote lethal sins i intend to address in this section and i'm announcing them so that you may know and at the same time you may have something in mind that you feel should be addressed and it's not in the list i encourage you to tell me instruct me what else we could address but the following will be included complaining that's next sunday uh complaining something we treat very uh very lightly uh everybody complains so what's wrong with that time wasting uh well it's just my personality i'm a slow person so time gets wasted and i affect others because of my time wasting and we treat that as something lethal well we will see what scriptures have to say on that then you know maquita because i am okay it's a boastfulness and this is something that can be that can be done ever so subtly yes very subtle which is good language to hear but it becomes a blanket to one's boastfulness and then laziness again some people tend to reduce this to personality well and i'm it's just my genetic you know i'm not diligent so i tend to do things rather the without diligence we will see to that and finally disrespect something that is quite widespread in our day uh without respect for those in legitimate authority and position so those are the five we will be considering if you are thinking of one uh one other scene perhaps that you feel are one of those little sins uh that is not in the list suggest it to me at least don't be scared i want to know more in my thinking these are the list that i already have but let me conclude with the words of second timothy 2 verse 21 if anyone cleanses himself from what is dishonorable he will be a vessel for honorable use set apart as holy useful to the master of the house ready for every good work now take note that the readiness is for every good work you can then extrapolate from that that cleansing oneself is from every bad work which is here described as dishonorable whether that is in the thought or something we regard as lethal that is what we need to do in order to increase in our usefulness for the master