

## What Shall We Say?

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our textual reflection this morning is taken from the book of Romans, the sixth chapter. What shall we say then? What shall we say concerning sin? Because so often in life we have a whole lot to say. So much that sometimes you don't know when to be quiet. So what about sin? The one topic, the one word, that we often refuse to go to open. We refuse to go there because all of us here are afraid. What shall we say? Shall we keep sinning? Yes or no? Sounds so easy.

Beloved in Christ, it is often believed that Luther wants every Christian to memorize the book of Romans because of texts like this. Beloved in Christ, what shall we say? Shall we keep sinning? Shall we turn around and pretend as if we don't see ourselves, we don't see our brothers or sisters, we don't see our parents, our family, we don't see our children sinning and pretend as if nothing is going on? Shall we just close our eyes pretending we do not see what is going on in our world and in our society? Every time we take a look, it's as if our world, our society is now becoming more and more sinful. We live in a world that redefines the word "sinner", where the word "sinning" becomes a word that church leaders, politicians, elderly, you name it, mothers, fathers, parents, becomes a word of authority, of power, just to make others listen to us. It becomes a word with no meaning.

So how about this? Let us refresh our memory this morning and find the meaning of the word "sin". Then we could go further down and realizing acknowledge whether now we should just keep quiet or we should just say something in case we have forgotten what it means. Well, it's very simple. Sin is every thought, every desire, everything that we have within our hearts, within our essence of being, that is contrary to the very word commandment of our Lord Jesus Christ? It's that simple. If you think God doesn't like it, then it's wrong. If it's wrong, then it's sin.

Theologians want even further just to divide sin into actual sin and original sin. So original sin is a total corruption of human nature that we inherited from Adam through our parents. Which means that the minute that we are born we are sinners, which King David echoes to us in Psalm 51 when he said in sin my mother conceived me. Which means that even the cutest baby that comes out of the mother's womb, that very nice-looking baby that we love and cherish so much, is

as guilty as a grown person. The baby is guilty because the baby inherited sin from his or her parents.

Beloved in Christ, we find ourselves living again in a world where the word “sin” gets tossed around. What is sin? What is not sin? What can I do? Is it church rules? Is it God’s rules or is it the Elders’ rules or is it the Board of Directors’ rules? Is it my parents’ rules? And now we even go further. Big sin. Small sin. The sin that I can do outside the church as a Pastor (I’ll pick myself as I can’t get in trouble with myself) that members cannot see. The sin that we hide in the closet. Well, since nobody knows about that one, then I can keep doing it. Because the only sin we see is the guy that committed murder. But we don’t see the little sin, as we put it, because those are too small for us. And as a result, we allow them to be more acceptable. We find ourselves saying that is okay to commit adultery. We find ourselves saying it is okay to divorce. Because you’ll find somebody else better than the ones making you suffer. We sometimes feel it’s okay to give just a little lie if it will save our job. A little lie and my wife or my husband will be happy. Should I continue down the list? You get the point.

Beloved in Christ, it is very hard to be a Christian. It is very hard to be a child of God. It is the most lonely thing, I can’t even think of the word, to be. Because to be a child of God is to fight the old Adam in us. It is to continue, as Luther said, it is to drown the old Adam in us every single day. Are you going to fall into sin? If you say no, then that’s a lie. Yes, you are going to fall into sin. But that doesn’t mean that you should dwell in it. That doesn’t mean you should do it over and over and over as if there is nothing wrong with it. You see, the reason why the Apostle Paul asked the question, What shall we say? It is pretty simple. Do you know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ would die in His death? Who are buried therefore by Him into death and know that as Jesus was raised from the dead by the glory of God we too might walk in newness of life?

When our beloved families and friends, when they die, we cry. We cry because it hurts us. Because the pain, the agony, their absence, because they will no longer be there for us. It hurts us so much it brings tears down over our eyes, when technically speaking we should be happy if they died in Christ. We should be happy because the minute the Pastor says, “I now baptize you in the Name of the Father, in the Name of the Son, in the Name of the Holy Spirit”, that’s when death actually occurs. In that very minute, God through our baptism took away every sin that we have inherited through our parents. Every sin that we were thinking,

every desire, every thought, everything that is going on in our mind, that is contrary to the Word of God, He forgives us in that very minute of our lives. So when we are looking at our loved one in the casket lying down, as painful as it is, we should have joy and happiness because they are sleeping. Because we will see them again, as the Apostle Paul said. Because on the cross, on that very cross, God left all of our old Adam in there. He gave us life so that you and I can be declared, so you and I can remain a child of God.

So how about this? How about we do not go back to the cross and pull out the old self that God has nailed on the cross? How about we leave them there, and if they ever come again, then with the help of the Holy Spirit they will go right back on the cross? You see, all the things that we don't think about, so often about this newness of life that we have in Christ Jesus, someone had to pay for it. Someone had to give their life for this life that you and I and the rest of the world are enjoying. It was not for free. There is a common saying that nothing is free. So the exact same applies to our salvation. Our Lord Jesus had to give His to life. He had to die for all, for you and I who are unworthy sinners, who keep on sinning even as you are walking through those double doors. He died. With a snap of His finger, as we often joke, He could have taken care of all the people there. He could have come down off the cross. He didn't have to die. But He did it because of the love that He has for us. And not only he died, but he also gave us His very Body and Blood as we are getting ready very soon to join Him in His Supper, to eat His body so that every time we partake of it, our sins are forgiven. And on top of it all, to remind ourselves of this newness of life, God gives us a glimpse of the heavenly realm, which means that every time we come here, we align here on the rail, we are joined together with our loved ones who have died in the faith, with the angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, meeting right here in the Supper of Christ.

So what shall we say when we see a loved one sinning? What shall we say when we see our society, our world, is moving through a direction contrary to the very word that you yourselves knew and have heard for all those years from your Pastor? Should we just turn away, pretend like we didn't hear, pretend like we didn't see what was going on? Matter of fact, we say, the Bible is so old that if Jesus Christ was here currently, He would not say anything? Some of the arguments that are out there.

Beloved in Christ, sin is the greatest pleasure ever. Because if you didn't have

pleasure doing it, you wouldn't be doing it. Rather we struggle. Some of us are stronger. Each of us have our own sinful desires that we are struggling with. Regardless which one it is, are we going to turn away? Now, saying something doesn't mean that you got to take the Bible and hit the person over the back of their head like you're better than them. No. With love and kindness, remind them that our Lord Jesus Christ died for their very sin. Remind them that they are not alone in whatever is going on in their life. Whatever is causing us to be doing things that are contrary to the Word of God.

What shall we say? Shall we keep sinning? Or shall we say what God wants you to say? That while it hurts our loved ones, while it might cause separation, while it might cause division and hate, the truth is that Christ forgives them from that very sin. A small sin is a sin. A big sin is a sin. It doesn't matter what kind of sin it is. A sin is everything that is contrary to God. That is why Jesus died for it.

In His name we pray. Amen.