

“Sin Is A Reproach To Any People”

Introduction. We are about a year and a half away from the 2016 Presidential election, and already it is the daily topic of political pundits. Many conservative news commentators seem to believe all of America’s ills can be solved by new leadership in Washington, a stronger military, or a robust economy. But the challenges our country faces today are greater and more serious than any of these.

In Proverbs 14:34, the wise man forever encapsulates the greatness or decline of any nation in a single sentence: “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.” Sin is our real problem and is seen in four areas of our national life.

I. Sin Is Responsible For The Collapse Of The Family

- A. Our family problems begin with a disrespect for God’s marriage laws (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 5:32; 19:3-9; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5).
- B. Promiscuity, easy divorce, adultery, homosexuality, and gender confusion is a result of selfishness. God will judge this sin (Hebrews 13:4).
- C. Furthermore, children are a blessing from the Lord (Psalm 127:3). What a tragedy that sin produces when parents neglect them and refuse to discipline and raise them righteously (Proverbs 29:15; Ephesians 6:1-4).

II. Sin Breeds Corruption In Government And Corporations

- A. A similar scenario is played out over and over again through the years. Abuse of position and constant scandals in government dominate the news cycle. When corporate abuse occurs, some blame our capitalistic, free enterprise system, but it is not the system.
- B. What happens? Pride. This produces lust for power and selfish agendas (Proverbs 16:8). People are also tempted to commit the greedy sins of stealing, dishonesty, and embezzlement (1 Corinthians 6:10).
- C. The greed of Eli’s sons for the best part of the sacrifices disqualified them from the priesthood (1 Samuel 2:29). Publicans were hated because of their greed and excessive profits, being placed in the same category as harlots (Matthew 21:32; cp. Luke 3:12-13).
- D. Paul warned against all types of greed because greed marked the Gentile or pagan way of life (Ephesians 4:19; 1 Thessalonians 2:5).

III. Sin Contributes To Our Economic Problems

- A. When people fail to work, take personal responsibility, and would rather receive a handout, then it will impact the overall economy in the form of sloth and laziness (Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:26; 12:27; 13:4; 19:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12).
- B. We have been so blessed by what we have been given, and by understanding stewardship, we know we should diligently take care of what we have for the true Owner (Psalm 24:1; 50:10-12; Matthew 25:14-30; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2, 7).
- C. Imagine the depth and meaning life would have if we saw everything as a stewardship: our possessions (Luke 12:21), our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19-20), our words (Matthew 12:36-37), our deeds (Romans 2:5-7), and our talents (Hebrews 5:12). We then use these with all of our might (Ecclesiastes 9:10).

- D. Stewardship will remove both selfishness and materialism. Stewardship allows us to be comfortable living in the world without being of the world.

IV. Sin Invades Churches And Produces Scandal Among Religious Leaders

- A. Some like to blame religion, but that is not true. It is hypocrisy and a lack of spirituality. Sinful attitudes and behavior drive this (Matthew 23:13-15, 23, 25, 27, 29; Acts 8:18-23; 3 John 9-11).
- B. You have the right and expectation that the men who oversee you spiritually and who preach the gospel to you are morally pure. Leaders are to be above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2-3, 7; Titus 1:7). They also have to be humble (2 Timothy 2:24-25) and self-controlled (2 Peter 1:6).

Conclusion. Do not blame Washington, the politicians, or the President for America's problems. Make no mistake: the greatest problem of America and humankind is sin. A maxim that I have heard all of my life is "Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay." Our country is paying — not just economically, but ethically, morally, and spiritually.

Sin enslaves the will. Sin stains the soul. Sin scars the conscience. Sin separates from God. Our only hope as a nation is a return to righteousness, godliness, and a biblical standard of morality. However, the good news is that we do not have to be slaves of sin. We can be free from its entanglement. We can be cleansed of its stain. We can rise above the reproach. In a world gone mad with lust and license, practice righteousness, sow seeds of righteousness, and produce the fruit of righteousness.