

Week 2.

- How do you understand the concept of sin?
- Read Isaiah 59:1-4,12-15.
- What is Isaiah's point in verse 2?
- Think for a moment about barriers. How might our 'sin' be a barrier between ourselves and God?
- Read the definition in italics opposite.
- Why might 'sin' be a problem for us?
- In Romans 3:23-24 Paul writes 'all have sinned'....

'This is not a blanket condemnation telling us how bad we are; it simply clears away any assumption that we have it in ourselves to form our own spirituality.'

[Spiritual Formation NRSV Bible : Hodder & Stoughton : 2005]

- The second definition has wider implications. Discuss.
- We may have / be 'messed up' but there is hope for us as Paul makes clear in the verses from Romans. What is the basis of our hope for a restored relationship with God?

You might find the verses from Romans from The Message opposite helpful. 'Right standing' is a good translation of the biblical word 'Justification' which is a legal term referring to justice. God takes on the ramifications of our sin through the gift of Jesus Christ.

- The barriers between God and ourselves can be overcome. Isaiah is saying that salvation is just around the corner!
- Close in prayer, thanking God for his initiative in sending Jesus to help us have a restored relationship with him.

Essential Gospel



We've Messed Up

'The Bible employs a variety of words to speak of sin, with meanings ranging from 'the missing of a mark or goal' or 'the breach of relationship' to 'ungodliness', 'perversion' or 'rebellion'. Yet the common theme of every biblical expression of the nature of sin is the central idea that sin is a state of our being that separates us from the holy God.'

[New Dictionary of Theology via Logos]

"sin" carries layers and subtleties of meaning that require further exploration. "Sin" commonly refers to wilful acts of disobedience but can also refer to corporate and systemic moral transgressions, to a pervasive part of humanity's condition that leaves us estranged from God, and to a state of fallenness into which we are born. "Sin" can also refer broadly to the distortion of all of God's creation from what God intended it to be.

[Dictionary of Christian Spirituality via Logos]

Since we've compiled this long and sorry record as sinners and proved that we are utterly incapable of living the glorious lives God wills for us, God did it for us. Out of sheer generosity he put us in right standing with himself. A pure gift. He got us out of the mess we're in and restored us to where he always wanted us to be. And he did it by means of Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:23-24 The Message



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