

How Jesus Beat the Same Sin You Battle Every Day

Not long ago, I was scheduled to speak at our church in Hawaii, Harvest Kumulani Chapel, on a Sunday morning. A couple of nights before, I noticed my legs were throbbing when I went to sleep. I had never had that before, and the next night it was even worse.

When I went to church that Sunday, a man walked up to me before the service and introduced himself. He was a retired doctor and was interested in ways he could potentially use his skills to serve the Lord on the mission field.

As we were talking, I said, "Well, Doc, I hate to bug you, but I have a question." I'm guessing this always happens to doctors. I explained to him how my legs were hurting, and he asked me all kinds of questions. After a while, he told me that I had restless leg syndrome.

"Do you take magnesium now?" he asked.

"No."

"Take magnesium," he said. "I'll get you some. I want to get you just the right kind."

So afterward I went over to his house, and he gave me a bottle of magnesium pills. He told me to take them right away and that I would feel better in a few hours. Three hours later, the pain was gone.

Pain comes our way in life, and it brings us to God, who gives us the solution to our pain. I didn't like the pain in my legs, but it brought me to the one who could remove the pain. When we have sin in our lives and come to God, he says, "Here's what you need to do: you need to confess your sin."

First John 1:9 says that “if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

What does it mean to “confess” our sin? It’s a word that means “to agree.” Let’s say that you and I walk outside and look up in the sky. I say, “Look at that cloud up there. That’s a beautiful cloud formation.”

“I agree,” you say. “That is really beautiful, isn’t it?”

We just agreed on something. In the same way, God says, “That’s a sin, and I don’t like it.”

When you say, “I agree. I don’t like it either,” you agree with God. You see it for what it is. You don’t make excuses for it. You don’t rationalize it. You own it. You take personal responsibility. As a result, the Bible says that God is “faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” He wipes the slate clean.

Some Christians may say they don’t need to do that because they’re justified before God. It is true that when you become a Christian, you’re justified, which means that all your sin is forgiven and the righteousness of Christ is placed into your spiritual account, if you will. You’re a child of God.

Confessing your sin, however, is not so that you become a child of God. Rather, confessing your sin is something you should do as a child of God. It is not about whether you’re a child of God. It is about whether you’re a child of God in close fellowship and communion with your Father.

That’s why we need to confess our sin. Jesus taught us, in what is known as the Lord’s Prayer, “Give us this day our daily bread,” followed by “forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors (Matt. 6:11–12). Just as we pray for daily provision, we should also pray for daily forgiveness.

The classic illustration is the prodigal son who ran away from home, dragged the family name through the gutter and then finally came to his senses and decided to return home. He said to his father, "I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (Luke 15:21).

His father could have said, "That's true. Now go out and work with the hired hands. You're not a son anymore." But the father didn't even listen. He said, "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him. And put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. Bring here the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry. For this son of mine was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' So they began to be merry" (Luke 15:22-24).

This son was returning to his father again in fellowship and communication. And that's why we need to confess our sins—because we sin each and every day. Are you willing to confess your sin to God? It's so easy to point the finger at someone else, but we need to accept responsibility for our actions. We need to say, "Lord, I've sinned against you."

Maybe you're thinking, "Well, I don't know that I've actually sinned that much. In fact, I certainly haven't sinned today."

There are different kinds of sin. There are sins of commission, which are obvious: lying, stealing, slandering, gossiping, lusting and so forth. Those clearly are sins. But then there are sins of omission, which is not doing what you should do.

We're told in the epistle of James, "Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, it is sin" (James 4:17).

There are a lot of ways sin can infiltrate our lives, which is why we all need to confess our sins to God on a regular basis. And the more we grow spiritually, the more we will realize that we need to grow spiritually. {eoa}

From my weekly column at World Net Daily.

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