

February 11-Genesis 42

It has been well said that sin costs you more than you want to pay, takes you farther than you want to go, and keeps you longer than you want to stay. We cannot manage sin, and the consequence can be absolutely debilitating. Today we read about how Joseph's brothers dealt with the long lasting effects of their sinful decision to sell him into slavery. In this account we read of the paranoia that is all too familiar to those who have attempted to hide their past transgressions while living with the constant fear that they will be discovered. This is the unseen penalty many of us pay for doing what feels good in the moment.

We see an example of this in Genesis 42. It has been several years since Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery and yet that act is still on their minds. Truthfully, they can't get away from the notion that payback is coming and it shows up in the strangest of moments. Jacob sends his sons to go and get some grain from Egypt because of the severe famine. Unbeknownst to him he sends his brothers right into the presence of the man whom they sold into slavery years ago. As Joseph and his brothers begin to interact, Joseph decides to mess with them a little bit by accusing them of being spies. This is a serious accusation and Joseph's brothers knew it! So, as they go back and forth, Joseph finally demands that they bring their youngest brother (who didn't make the trip) in order to prove that they are not spies. In a brief interchange recorded in verses 21-22 Reuben states, "Did I not tell you not to sin against the boy? But you did not listen. So now there comes a reckoning for his blood." Isn't it odd that our minds immediately go to past unconfessed sins when times are tough? Its almost instinct for us that we are being punished. The truth is that what goes unconfessed does not go away.

Reuben's statement is sobering. Here is a man who has lived with guilt for years. This guilt didn't go away, instead it was on the tip of his tongue when he was pressed. So many of us buy the lie that over time the pain and suffering caused by our own secret sin will go away but the truth is that it simply festers inside of us. We may become adept at hiding our sin to the outside world but we cannot control what it does to us on the inside.

Maybe you are living today with guilt and paranoia from some past sin you committed. Trust me, you will not get away from its hold until you confess it and bring it to light. This may seem tough (and it will be) but remember that we serve a God that inspired this verse to be written: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9). Of course, this forgiveness is found because of the sacrifice of Christ. While it is true that sin will cost us, keep us, and take us places we don't want to go it is equally true that in Christ we are offered salvation from the hold sin has on us! He has provided for us a way out from under the bondage of sin and we do not have to deal with it, or the guilt and paranoia it brings, anymore. Christ knew that He was dying for sinners like us. Your sin is not a surprise to God, He already knows all things, but it is a detriment to your growth and peace. Thankfully, forgiveness is waiting, it is up to you whether or not you will take hold of it today. Confess your sin to Christ, ask for His forgiveness and seek reconciliation with anyone you may have offended, then and only then will you be truly free!