

Lent and the Five Shadows of Sin.

This week we commence our series on looking at five of the different shadows which sin can create. We use the term shadow deliberately as sin is so elusive that it is helpful to see it from a range of perspectives. Shadows leave an impression and no one shadow tells the whole story. It is hoped that this series will give all of us a clearer picture of sin...

- To be able to see sin for what it really is,
- To help us deal with the sin in our own heart,
- To help us understand better the evil we see in the world around us, and
- To see Jesus and what He has done more clearly

This is all part of our build up to the Easter season and our focus on Jesus and his victory in defeating sin in its totality.

Each week we will put up on our web site a study of the previous Sunday's sermon. These sermons will be on:

- Sin as Predator 18 /2/18
- Sin as Leaven 25/2/18
- Sin as Leprosy 4/3/18
- Sin as Self deceit 11/3/18
- Sin as Slavery 18/3/18

For each of these themes we will also be seeing how Jesus is our hope and redeemer from every aspect or shadow of sin.

These discussion guides are aimed at not only helping us to better understand the content of each study but to also encourage our own reflection and meditation on what Jesus might be saying to us now. Whilst this series on the different shadows of sin can be confronting, it can also be liberating as we allow the grace and mercy of Christ to sink even deeper into our lives.

One of the important aspects of this study is for each one of us to find Christians who we trust so that we can have "honest conversations" with them. Our Life Groups provide an opportunity for this type of discussion but even then, we need only share to the level that we feel comfortable.

So, whether you are undertaking this discussion guide as part of your Life group or as part of your personal study we have some exciting days ahead. May the Lord continue to guide each one of us as we discover more of the healing power of Jesus.

Sunday 18th February

Reading: Genesis 4:1-16 Sin as a Predator

- 1 Background understanding:
 - 1 Genesis 3 describes the fact of sin happening and its devastating consequences whilst Genesis 4 reveals God's thoughts on what sin is i.e. sin is a predator, sin desires to get you and that there is hope to defeat sin.
- 2 Cain's offering was not accepted by God. Gen 4:3-5.
 - 1 Why wasn't Cain's offering accepted? see 1 John 3:12
 - 2 What is meant by "his life didn't match his offering"? how can this apply to church life?
- 3 Sin as a predator (Gen 4:7)
 - 1 Sin crouches: i.e. using the hunter analogy, sin tries to look small and hidden and so deliberately deceptive.
 - 1 Give examples of situations where you have seen this in action.
 - 2 "When we think that we are better than others..." explain how this can be an example of sin crouching.
 - 3 How has this also affected your own life?
 - 2 Sin desires to have you:
 - 1 "The predator is not content with a taste but wants all of the prey". What does this mean in our story?
 - 2 What does Shane mean when he says, "the power of sin is not quenched by giving in to it, you are, in fact, feeding it"?
 - 3 How does this shadow of sin being a predator (camouflaged, hiding, looking small, looking insignificant) help us to understand aspects of our culture? Give examples.
- 4 "But you must rule over it" Gen 4:7
 - 1 What does God point to in this statement?
 - 2 Does the bible give evidence of those who can "rule over it"? Explain.
 - 3 Gen 4:10. "Your brother's blood cries out to me". Where is this issue finally resolved? See Hebrews 12:23b-24
 - 3 How is repentance the key to "ruling over"?