



Sunday September 13, 2020
Poisoned and Bound

Scripture Text: **Acts 8:4-25**

Simon the sorcerer had become a believer in Christ.

We cannot question or doubt his salvation experience.

Vs 13 states: he believed, he was baptized and followed Philip, amazed at the miracles.

This was normal practice in the Early Church, people believe in Jesus, they are baptized and they are discipled. So Simon was also in this process.

But vs 23 says something happened, that he had to be rebuked as being 'poisoned by bitterness and bound by sin'

8:23

(NKJV) For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.

(GNB) For I see that you are full of bitter envy and are a prisoner of sin.

(TPT) For I discern that jealous envy has poisoned you and binds you as a captive to sin.

How did Simon, who after his conversion seemed to be making progress in his journey as a believer, suddenly find himself in this undesirable place of being 'poisoned by bitterness and bound by sin'.

DANGEROUS PROGRESSION

Let us identify the steps that progressively led to Simon coming into this undesirable place.

Our goal is not to be fixated in Simon's specific experience, but to draw insights and in some way, safely, within the bounds of Scripture, to generalize, so that these insights would apply to all of us.

#1, MISUNDERSTANDING of God's ways and works

Acts 8:20

But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!"

A misunderstanding or wrong understanding of the ways in which God works, of what God is doing, etc. In this specific case, Simon thought that what God was offering as a gift could be purchased with money.

As a side note, the word 'simony' the practice of profiting (making money) by means of religion, probably originates from this incident.



Sometimes we misunderstand the work of God, the ways of God and what God is doing.

Consider some examples of how we misunderstand the ways and works of God:

In God's working in our own lives

- Something we are expecting God to do, does not happen in the time or manner we would have liked it to happen.
- Unexpected challenges arise and God seems completely silent as we seem to be left alone to deal with the challenges.

In God's working in those around us

- We think that some other person who has been blessed by God, does not deserve to be blessed in such a way.
- We think the person whom God is using is not fit to be used – maybe they are too young, too immature, not very godly, not very polished, etc. etc.
- We think that things should happen our way, and not the way they are currently happening.
- We do not have a frame of reference for what God is saying or doing, and so we discard it or even attack it, as if it were heresy.

This is not to say that we should not discern and judge what we hear and see. Of course, we must. But we must be careful not to arrive at wrong conclusions. More on this later.

#2, MISALIGNMENT with God's heart

Acts 8:21

You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God.

There was a misalignment between his heart and God's heart.

Simon's heart shifted from being in a right place before God to a place where his heart was no longer right in the sight of God.

This shifting or misalignment of heart posture happens, when our desires are no longer aligned to His desires, or our interests are no longer aligned to His interests, or our perspective is no longer aligned to His perspective.

Consider Lucifer

We often wonder how the very first sin originated. Lucifer was an arch angel, perfect in beauty, full of wisdom, created to be the chief worshipper of God. He was in the very glory and presence of God. How could Lucifer possibly sin.

Isaiah 14:13-14

13 For you have said in your heart: 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation On the farthest sides of the north;

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.'



Notice verse 13: 'you have said in your heart....'

Lucifer deceived himself. He thought he could become and have something that was not for him.

SELF-DECEPTION IS A DANGEROUS THING. THIS IS WHAT CAUSED LUCIFER TO GET INTO HIS PLACE OF PRIDE.

SELF-DECEPTION MOVES US OUT OF ALIGNMENT WITH GOD.

SELF-DECEPTION IS SO DANGEROUS BECAUSE WE DO NOT EVEN KNOW WE ARE DECEIVED.

WE THINK WE ARE RIGHT, WHEN WE ARE WRONG, AND WE DO NOT KNOW IT.

WE HAVE EMBRACED A LIE, AS THOUGH IT WAS THE TRUTH.

#3, MALICIOUSNESS towards God and people

Acts 8:22-23

22 Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you.

23 For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."

Became wicked, evil or malicious in the thoughts of his heart.

There was jealousy and bitterness – toward people and toward God.

POISONED AND BOUND

He was poisoned by bitterness and bound (imprisoned) by sin.

We must understand this progression:

MISUNDERSTANDING of the work of God, leading to a MISALIGNMENT of heart before God, leading to MALICIOUSNESS towards God and people, will eventually lead us to a place of being poisoned by bitterness and bound by sin.

Bitterness could be birthed out of any number of reasons: envy, jealousy, hurt, etc.

BITTERNESS IS LIKE POISON. IT DESTROYS THE ONE WHO HAS IT, NOT THE OTHERS.

Hebrews 12:15

looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

BITTERNESS CAN SPRING UP, CAUSE TROUBLE FOR ONE'S SELF AND AFFECT OTHERS AS WELL.

SOMETIMES THE ROOT CAUSE FOR THE TROUBLES WE ARE FACING IS THE POISON OF BITTERNESS, THE ROOT OF BITTERNESS WE ARE CARRYING.

This also puts us in a place of being bound and imprisoned by sin. This could be sins of the heart and of the flesh (2 Corinthians 7:1).



PREVENTION AND CURE

Let us talk about prevention and cure. This is the focus of this message. How do we prevent such dangerous progression in our lives? And what would be the cure, if any one of us, find ourselves in such a place today.

PREVENTION

Remember the adage, prevention is better than cure.

#1, SEEK RIGHT UNDERSTANDING

Ask God to help you understand His ways and His works in your life as well as in those around you.

In Paul's pastoral epistle to Timothy, as Paul writes much about the Christian faith, life and ministry, he interjects with this statement:

2 Timothy 2:7

Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.

Learn to pray simple prayers:

Lord, please help me to understand your heart, your ways, your works.

Lord, I do not understand what is happening here, please help me.

Lord, I do not understand what you are doing in that person's life. Please help me understand.

Ephesians 1:17-18

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,

Ask the Holy Spirit, who is the spirit of wisdom and revelation to give you understanding so that you may know God's plans, purposes, ways and workings.

DO NOT FIGHT WHAT YOU DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

DO NOT EVEN COMMENT ABOUT IT – BECAUSE A LOSE COMMENT CAN UNDO SOMEONE ELSE.

BE WILLING TO EXPAND YOUR SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING.

In today's knowledge world we understand the importance of learning, unlearning and relearning. In some areas, this applies to spiritual understanding too.

#2, GUARD YOUR HEART

Always ask God to give you a clean heart.



Always maintain a heart that is right before God.
Always desire for your heart to be aligned to His heart.

Learn to pray simple prayers:
God I want to know your heart.

Proverbs 4:23

Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

Make a quality decision that you will not let anything displeasing to God to get into your heart: anger, unforgiveness, jealousy, bitterness, strife, competition, etc.

WHAT OFFENDS YOUR MIND, EXPOSES YOUR HEART. Watch what comes out of your mouth, when your mind is offended. It will show you what is really inside your heart (Matthew 12:34).

KEEP YOUR HEART (thoughts, motives, attitudes, pursuits) ALWAYS ALIGNED TO HIS WORD

#3, CHOOSE TO WALK IN LOVE ALWAYS

1 John 4:16

....God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

This is the perfect place to be.

CURE

Repent – Get right before God.

Renounce – Wrong heart attitudes, bitterness, sin, etc.

Restore – What you have attempted to withhold or take away from someone else.

REVIEW/SUMMARY

Poisoned by bitterness, bound by sin

DANGEROUS PROGRESSION

#1, MISUNDERSTANDING of God's ways and works

#2, MISALIGNMENT with God's heart

#3, MALICIOUSNESS towards God and people

PREVENTION

#1, Seek right understanding

#2, Guard your heart

#3, Choose to walk in love always

CURE

#1, Repent



#2, Renounce

#3, Restore



LIFE GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Sunday September 13, 2020
Poisoned and Bound

This is a simple guide for use in Life Group discussions. Our objective is to focus on the application of the Sunday sermon - how each one is becoming a doer of the Word and building their life on God's Holy Word. The Life Group meeting would normally last for 2 hours. Each Life Group would have up to 12-15 people.

Preparation

To prepare for the Life Group meeting, you can listen to the Sermon Key Points (sermon summary in five minutes) or the full length Sunday sermon. You can also review the Sunday Sermon notes. All these are available in the "All Peoples Church Bangalore" mobile App or online at apcwo.org/sermons. Pray for the Life Group meeting and invite the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Welcome

The Life Group meeting may commence with a time of prayer, worship and a fun activity.

LISTEN to God's Word

Read the following Scripture passages: *Acts 8:4-25*

INVESTIGATE God's Word Together

Please discuss a few of these together, giving time for people to share their insights. We encourage each one individually to make notes of their personal learning during the Group discussion.

1) Analyze the dangerous progression – the three stages of misunderstanding, misalignment and maliciousness – that led to Simon finding himself in the undesirable place of being poisoned by bitterness and bound by sin. Look at some real life experiences or potential situations where you as a believer, if not careful, could go down a similar slippery slope.

2) Review the three preventive measures that were presented to keep ourselves from the dangerous progression. How do we practice these in every day life?



3) Pray for each other that none may go down this path leading to being poisoned and imprisoned. IF any find themselves there presently, apply the cure (repent, renounce, restore) and pray for each other to be fully delivered.

If time permits, each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share one or two key learning and how they see themselves applying it into their specific life situations. Encourage each one to participate and share.

FELLOWSHIP by sharing your life and spiritual journey

Each one takes a few (3 minutes max) to share anything from their walk with God, something God has been teaching them, a testimony of answered prayer or a specific challenge that they would like prayer for. Encourage each one to participate and share.

ENCOURAGE each other by praying and ministering to one another

Get into small groups of two or three and take turns to thank God and pray for each other in the light of what was learnt today. Listen to the Holy Spirit. Expect the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow bringing healing, releasing miracles, prophecy, etc.

Regroup and pray together for:

1, families to be protected and strengthened

2, a mighty outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on us as a church and through us to bless many others in our city and nation. Nothing but a mighty work of God's Spirit can change our city and nation.

3, for the BUILD TO IMPACT project - for God's hand to guide us through the land search and acquisition process, and for finances to be more than enough to get this project done.

Close by thanking God together.



USEFUL RESOURCES



Watch our online Sunday Church service live stream every Sunday at 10:30am (Indian Time, GMT+5:30). Spirit filled, anointed worship, Word and ministry for healing, miracles, and deliverance.

YOUTUBE: <https://youtube.com/allpeopleschurchbangalore>

WEBSITE: <https://apcwo.org/live>

Our other websites and free resources:

CHURCH: <https://apcwo.org>

FREE SERMONS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/sermons>

FREE BOOKS: <https://apcwo.org/books/english>

DAILY DEVOTIONALS: <https://apcwo.org/resources/daily-devotional>

JESUS CHRIST: <https://examiningjesus.com>

BIBLE COLLEGE: <https://apcbiblecollege.org>

E-LEARNING: <https://apcbiblecollege.org/elearn>

WEEKEND SCHOOLS: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/weekend-schools>

COUNSELING: <https://chrysalislife.org>

MUSIC: <https://apcmusic.org>

MINISTERS FELLOWSHIP: <https://pamfi.org>

CHURCH APP: <https://apcwo.org/app>

CHURCHES: <https://apcwo.org/ministries/churches>

WORLD MISSIONS: <https://apcworldmissions.org>