

The Psalms: Cries of the Human Heart

August 17 The New “S” Word – Psalm 32

“Today, the word sin has lost its power and awesome intensity. It’s used most frequently in the context of fattening desserts. Most people in daily conversation don’t talk much about individual sin. If they talk about human evil at all, that evil is most often located in the structures of society – in inequality, oppression, racism, and so on – not in the human breast.

We’ve abandoned the concept of sin, first, because we’ve left behind the depraved view of human nature.... Second, in many times and many places, the word sin was used to declare war on pleasure, even on the healthy pleasures of sex and entertainment. Sin was used as a pretext to live joylessly and censoriously. Furthermore, the word sin was abused by the self-righteous, by dry-hearted souls who seemed alarmed by the possibility that someone somewhere might be enjoying himself....

But in truth, sin is one of those words that is impossible to do without. Sin is a necessary piece of our furniture because it reminds us that life is a moral affair. Sin is baked into our nature and is handed down through the generations. We are all sinners together. ...Sin, when it is committed over and over again, hardens into loyalty to a lower love.”

(David Brooks, The Road to Character)

Wesleyan

Reformed

Sin is broken relationship

Sin is a moral/legal infraction

Sin is twisted love

Sin is a thing to be excised

Sin is cleansed

Sin is covered over

Righteousness is being made right by Jesus

The righteousness of Christ is imputed to us in place of moral change within us

Salvation is the healing of broken relationships and twisted desire

Salvation is the removal of the penalty for sin

The goal is likeness to Jesus, holiness

The goal is eternal security

“The future of American religion depends on believers who can demonstrate, in word and deed alike, that the possibilities of the Christian life are not exhausted by TV preachers and self-help gurus, utopians, and demagogues. It depends on public examples of holiness, and public demonstrations of what the imitation of Christ can mean for a fallen world. We are waiting, not for another political savior or television personality, but for a Dominic or a Francis, an Ignatius or a Wesley, a Wilberforce or a Newman, a Bonhoeffer or a Solzhenitsyn. Only sanctity can justify Christianity’s existence; only sanctity can make the case for faith; only sanctity, or the hope thereof, can ultimately redeem the world.”

(Russ Douthat, How We Became a Nation of Heretics)