

The Weight You Cannot Feel

By: David Burruss

One of the most dangerous things about sin is that it often becomes invisible to the very person carrying it. You would think a heavy burden would announce itself, but sin does not usually work that way. It settles in quietly, and the longer we carry it, the less we seem to notice it is there.

There is an old story about a young man who mockingly challenged a preacher on this very point. He said, "You say that unsaved people carry a great weight of sin. Frankly, I feel nothing. How heavy is sin? Ten pounds? Fifty pounds? Eighty pounds? A hundred pounds?" He was smug about it, sure that his lack of guilt proved he had nothing to worry about.

The preacher paused for a moment and then asked a simple question. "If you laid a four hundred-pound weight on a corpse, would it feel the load?" The young man answered right away, "Of course not. It's dead." And the preacher replied quietly, "The person who doesn't know Christ is equally dead. And though the load is great, he feels none of it."

That short exchange captures something Scripture has been telling us all along. A person who is spiritually dead does not recognize the crushing burden of sin, because spiritual death has dulled his awareness of it. So the absence of guilt is not proof of innocence. It may simply be evidence of a heart that has grown insensitive to God.

Paul describes our condition before Christ in Ephesians 2:1, telling us that we were "dead in trespasses and sins" before He made us alive. Notice that Paul does not call sinners merely sick or struggling. He calls them dead. And a dead person cannot respond, cannot heal himself, and cannot even recognize his own condition without help from outside himself. That is exactly where every one of us stood before the grace of God reached us through the gospel.

Sin works this way because it is deceptive by nature. It hardens the heart little by little, until what once troubled the conscience no longer seems wrong at all. Paul described people who had reached that point when he wrote that they were "past feeling" and had "given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:19). Read that phrase again, because it should stop us in our tracks. A conscience that no longer feels conviction is not a healthy conscience. It is a conscience in danger.

Jesus came because our burden was far greater than anything we could remove on our own. The guilt of sin was never really measured in pounds anyway. It is measured by the separation it creates between us and our Creator. Isaiah put it plainly when he wrote that our iniquities had separated us from God, and that our sins had hidden His face from us so that He would not hear us (Isaiah 59:2). That is the real weight of sin, and no amount of numbness changes what it has done.

The good news, and it really is good news, is that Jesus does not only expose our true condition. He also provides the only remedy for it. Through His death, burial, and resurrection, He offers forgiveness and spiritual life to everyone who comes to Him in obedience. The burden we could never carry ourselves gets lifted, because He bore the penalty in our place.

And here is what I find so remarkable about conversion. The greatest miracle is not simply that our sins get forgiven, though that alone would be enough. It is that our hearts come alive again. We start to see sin

differently once that happens. What once seemed harmless now grieves us, and what once brought pleasure now brings sorrow, because we have learned to love the One who saved us.

David understood exactly what a sensitive heart looks like, because he had lived through the aftermath of his own sin. After Nathan confronted him, David prayed that the sacrifices God wants are "a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart," and that these are the sacrifices God will not despise (Psalm 51:17). So a heart that feels the weight of sin is not a heart drifting away from God. It is a heart already moving toward Him.

If you feel conviction today, do not brush it aside. That feeling is evidence that God's word is at work in your heart. Hebrews 4:12 tells us that the word of God is "living and powerful," able to reach into the deepest parts of our lives and expose what is really there. Conviction is not something to resent. It is something to be thankful for, because it points us toward repentance and forgiveness.

But if sin no longer troubles you at all, that should concern you far more than any guilty conscience ever could. The greatest danger was never feeling the weight of sin too much. It is becoming so spiritually numb that you stop recognizing it is there at all.

Only Christ can bring life to a soul that is dead. Only His gospel can awaken a sleeping conscience. And only His grace can remove a burden that no one else could ever carry for us.

The weight of sin is real whether we feel it or not. So the real question was never how heavy it is. The question is whether we are spiritually alive enough to recognize it, and humble enough to let Christ take it from us.