

## Is one sin as bad in God's eyes as another?

Sin is creating that which does not fit God. Sin is trying to create something in opposition to God. It is trying to make something be a contradiction to God. It is like trying to kill God's absolute goodness and doing that would be very malicious in itself and in its consequences because God creates and governs all things.

If all sins are not equally bad in the harm they do, they could still be equally bad in the message they send to God. The reason sin is so terrible in the Christian scheme is not because of the harm it does but because of the greatness of the being who is sinned against. God is that which cannot possibly logically speaking or otherwise be any better so this makes sin very grave. The hypothetical may not be real but it is still good for telling us what is inside us. Imagine complete unimaginable goodness existed. Sin is trying to corrupt it by making sure that evil exists to confront it and so that the goodness is not as great any more. Evil is parasitic on good which means it is trying to pollute it and stop it being so good.

The trouble with making sin out to be infinitely serious is that it makes you arrogant if you refrain from sin. There is pride in not doing something that you can do that is unimaginably bad. To fail to do something terribly by default is to do something incredibly and unbelievably good! The pride is inevitable. Human nature is complex so you can be arrogant in one thing and humble in others so do not be distracted by the humble! If it were possible human nature would be completely arrogant but makes do with confining it to certain things or being forced to confine it. If some principle makes you arrogant then you are forced to be arrogant. Sometimes one huge form of arrogance - concealing the arrogance is a form of arrogance too - is enough to satisfy the dark side of human nature. The arrogance is off the scale because it is clear that a perfect and happy God who has no needs can by definition have no right to tell us what to do.

Jesus' apostle Paul called himself the foremost of sinners - present tense in 1 Timothy 1:15. It is believed that he meant that if you are very holy and you sin yours are worse than the sins of less holy people for you have less excuse. It is the principle of how corruption of the best is the worst evil.

Jesus told Pilate that he who betrayed him had done worse than Pilate who was going to crucify him.

Jesus said that blasphemy is sinful but blaspheming the Holy Spirit is the worst.

So in terms of damage done, sins are not equal.

Some say Jesus is saying that sin is only worse than other sins when you think about damage seen. If you could see all the harm and the long term results you would see that all sin does equal damage.

In terms of cutting you off from God all sins are equal. The Bible says that any sin at all estranges you from God and dissolves your relationship with him - James 2:10. The wages of any sin is death as in the death of this relationship which eventually kills the body too - Romans 6:23.

Back to James. James says that if you teach faith and morals you will be judged even more strictly by God. That seems to imply all sins are not equally bad. But it could mean that though all sins are equally bad any situation that leads to you committing more sins than anybody else needs stricter assessment by God. James 2:10 is thought by many not to be saying that if you break a moral law you break them all but that if you break the law of Moses that God gave you break it all. He is thought to mean that if you break the law of the land, the law no longer cares what laws you kept. But James does not distinguish between the law of Moses and moral law. For the Jews, it is moral to obey the Law of Moses. And if a legal code is totally ruined by breaking one law why can't a moral law be the same? There is no reason to think James is thinking of law as in the Law of Moses here.

James says the prayer of a good man is tremendous in how it gets favours from God which seems to say that not all people are good men so all are not equally sinners. But a good man is simply a forgiven sinner so that is the answer. James is not talking about sin but forgiven men.

People rebel against the idea of sins being equal in how they terminate your connection to God even if they don't seem to do much damage otherwise. They are denying then that rebelling against God is the thing that really matters. They don't want to believe that if sin hurts others then the hurting of others is collateral damage and the concern is how it treats God.

If your young son is told that putting his tongue out behind the teachers back is as bad as being a murderer or rapist then you can hardly complain if he feels rape and murder is no big deal. He will feel slandered if you told him that he is

extremely bad just like the Devil simply because he put out his tongue. Being slandered can make you a slanderer.

It leads to any goodness in his character being disregarded or ignored.

And if we are all as bad as each other, then Hitler should be pope or emperor or whatever just as much as Martin Luther King should be. And a paedophile is going to be as trustworthy of a baby sitter as anybody else.

Let us look at the texts which are purported to say that all sins are not equal.

Jesus said “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel” (Matthew 23: 23 – 24).

Matthew 7:3 Jesus says, “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?”

Matthew 11:23-24 has Jesus saying, “If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you.” This seems to indicate that Sodom was not as bad as the people Jesus was condemning for refusing to repent.

Luke 12:47,48 says that if you know God's will and do not do it you will be punished more than the one who does not know.

“You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel”

Matthew 15:18-19: “But what comes out of the mouth comes from the heart, and this defiles a man. For from the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies.”

Today, if Christians campaign against Gay Pride they are accused of singling out a sin. But all sin being equal does not mean you ignore sin when you see it. It depends if Gay Pride is guilty of the sin of pride and if homosexuality is a sin. It is not enough with which to accuse them of homophobia.