

And Shall Hide A Multitude Of Sins

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James 5:19-20

James 5:19-20, *“Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”*

James tells us that one who converts a sinner from the error of his way, saves a soul and hides a multitude of sins.

This should be a matter of great concern for all of us, for we are all sinners. Rom. 3:23, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”*

Furthermore, sin brings eternal death. (James 5:19-20 above).

In view of this, we ought to be interested in having these sins of ours hidden.

How can we have our sins hidden? Let us study this, taking notice of what will not hide our sins and of what will hide our sins.

Man tries to hide his sins by literally hiding them

Adam and Eve tried to hide their sins by hiding from God.

Gen. 3:8, *“And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.”*

It did not work for them, and it won't work for us.

Achan tried this.

- Joshua 7:11, *“Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.”*
- Joshua 7:21, *“When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.”*

God was angry with the entire tribe of Israel because Achan had taken of the spoils of Jericho. His entire family was destroyed because of what he did. Hiding did not work for him.

This effort to hide sins did not pass with these. This is prevalent today. People “slip around” and do this or that and try to hide their sins. It will not work. You can be sure your sins will find you out.

Num. 32:23, “*But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the LORD: and be sure your sin will find you out.*”

Others try to hide their sins by admitting their sins, and then apologizing by shifting the blame to others

Adam and Eve tried that also.

Gen. 3:12-13, “*And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*”

But, what did this have to do with their guilt?

Aaron, the brother of Moses, tried this method of hiding his sins.

Exo. 32:1-22, “*And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked*

people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people. And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables. And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it. And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief."

Aaron did not look any whiter because of the cry of the people. He was still guilty.

People try to excuse themselves in the same way today. They say, "My friends aren't Christians, and I wouldn't want to offend them." But, what does that have to do with guilt?

Others try to hide their sins by persecuting the ones who correct them. The Corinthians are good examples of this.

- 2 Cor. 10:9-10, "*That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.*"
- 2 Cor. 11:6-8, "*But though I be rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been throughly made manifest among*

you in all things. Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of God freely? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service.”

Such action may throw up a smoke screen and hide guilt in the eyes of some, but it will not cover sin.

Messages from Bible prophets:

- Noah’s message from the steps going up into the Ark was not, “Something good is going to happen to you!”
- Jeremiah was not put into the lion’s den for telling people, “I’m O.K., you’re O.K.!”
- Daniel was not put into the lion’s den for telling people, “Possibility thinking will move mountains!”
- John the Baptist was not forced to preach in the wilderness and eventually was beheaded because he preached, “Smile, God loves you!”
- The two prophets of the tribulation will not be killed for preaching, “God is in His heaven, and all is right with the world!”

Instead, what was the message of all these men of God? Simply, one word, “*Repent!*”

Others try to hide their sins by waiting for time to dissolve them

Joseph’s brothers had hoped this would work for them; but they found that their sin had not been hidden even with the passing of time.

Gen. 42:21-23, “*And they said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us. And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required. And they knew not that Joseph understood them; for he spake unto them by an interpreter.”*

Men have a misconception of time and what it will and will not do.

- 2 Pet. 3:3-4, “*Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying,*

Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.”

- Num. 32:23, “*But if ... ye have sinned against the LORD: ... be sure your sin will find you out.*”
- Rev. 20:13, “*And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*”

Those sins were carried a mighty long time. Time does not erase sins, repentance and confession does.

Others try to hide their sins by lying and denying their sin

Sarah lied to cover her doubts and fear.

Gen. 18:1-15, “And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground, And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetcht a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat. And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and

Sarah shall have a son. Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.”

It didn't work. This might be the most common method used today. It won't work. Lying to cover his sins has brought down a President (Nixon).

There is but one real and genuine way to hide sins

James 5:19-20, “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.”

Alien sinners must be converted.

Must hear. Rom. 10:17-18, *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”*

Must believe. Acts 16:30-31, *“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”*

Must repent. Acts 17:30, *“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”*

Must confess. Rom. 10:9-10, *“That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”*

Must be baptized. 1 Pet. 3:21, *“The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”*

Erring Christians must also be converted.

Must repent. Acts 8:18-22, *“And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent*

therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.”

Must confess and pray for forgiveness.

- James 5:16, *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”*
- 1 John 1:9, *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Without confession of our sins, there is no remission of our sins.

If one brother sins against another brother, they are first to work it out privately. If that doesn't work, two or three witnesses are brought in another attempt to work it out. If that doesn't work, the matter is brought before the church. A private sin is then made public.

At Delta, Colorado, one year, the question was asked, “Does a confession have to be public. There was a bit of discussion about this, and most people felt however broad the sin was known, the confession should also be the same. If there is a private sin between two people, the confession is then only between those involved. If the sin is against God, Jesus Christ, or the church, and the sin is generally known, then the sin is a public sin, and the confession should also be public.

If there is no repentance with admission of guilt, there can be no pardon.

I read where some years ago, a murderer was convicted and placed in a penitentiary. After spending a number of years in prison, he was coming up to a time where he could be released early on a pardon. His brother had started an inquiry as to what procedures were necessary to obtain this release. Upon visiting his brother in prison, he asked him, “What would you do if you were released from prison?” His brother responded, “The first thing I would do is to track down the judge who sentenced me, and murder him; and the next thing I would do is to track down the chief witness, and murder him.” The brother rose, and left upon that statement. He recommended to the prison officials that his brother pay the full time of his imprisonment without any early release. He paid the price of no repentance.

Someday the sinners of this world will have to pay the full price of their sins if they have had no repentance from those sins.

This is the only way sins can be hidden.

Conclusion.

Do you need to be converted? Why wait?

