

Matthew 18:15-20

Pentecost 15; September 10 & 11, 2023

The story is told that one day, a man and his wife decided to go to a drive-in movie. The husband had the bright idea of trying to save the price of one admission, because admission was charged based on how many people were in the car. Just outside of the theater entrance, they stopped the car and the husband slipped into the trunk. The wife then paid for her admission, parked inside, and went back to let her husband out of the trunk. There was only one problem – he had the trunk keys in his pocket! (There were different keys for the ignition and the trunk.) After their efforts failed, the wife had to call for help. I don't know how many rescue people showed up, but by the time it was all over everyone knew that they had tried to cheat the theater out of the price of a ticket. The rescue people had to force the trunk open, which resulted in a good deal of damage. When it was all over, neither the husband nor the wife saw the movie, they suffered considerable humiliation, and they had to pay for the repairs to their trunk. Sometimes, sin can have disastrous results.

Over and over again, it plays out in the world. Sometimes, as people become very successful in life, that it begins to get to their heads. They begin to think that they are above everyone else. They don't have to follow what everyone else has to do. There are many stories of Hollywood celebrities that gained fame so fast that it got the best of them. When fame comes, so does the pressure to be in the spotlight. There is no way to handle the magnifying glass on their life that they begin to make bad choices in their life. Think of the professional athlete who goes from a nobody to someone that everyone knows their name. They begin to make bad judgments in their personal life or professional life that almost destroys them. The temptation that that success has brought them is just too much for a person to resist. Sometimes, sin can have disastrous results.

The Bible has many examples of people where sin has disastrous results in peoples' lives. Think of King David. It could be argued that King David was the greatest king that Israel ever had. He had more power and wealth that anyone could have imagined. It was going to be through his family line that the Savior of the world was to come. Sometimes, all that fame and power can go to people's heads. They can begin to think that they can do anything that they want. So, one evening his eyes began to wander. He ends up committing adultery with Bathsheba. To cover up that sinful act, he commits murder. He thought that he got away with it. Nobody seemed to know. Until that day when God sent the prophet Nathan to expose his sin. Sometimes, sin can have disastrous results.

Think of Joseph in the book of Genesis. His father had favored him above his brothers. Even though Joseph could see that happening, it began to get to his head. He began to think that he was above them. He would take advantage of that with his brothers. Then one day they had enough. Some wanted to kill him. But they were persuaded to sell Joseph as a slave. Sin, can have disastrous results. Yet, God would work out all things for the good.

Sin can have disastrous results. That is really why Jesus speaks the words of our text this morning. He knows how disastrous sin can be.