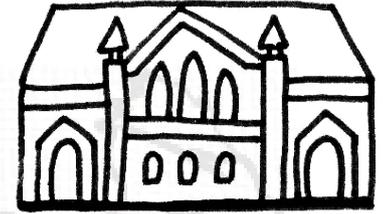


# Welcome to Calvary Church, Brighton



Today 13<sup>th</sup> January 2019 speaker Philip Wells, Full-time Elder.  
This morning - Isaiah and the gospel - sin

*[www.calvary-brighton.org.uk](http://www.calvary-brighton.org.uk)*

*[Sermons and talks - calvary-brighton.sermon.net](http://calvary-brighton.sermon.net)*

# What's the problem with the world?

*Is it government?*

*Is it the system? The establishment?*

*Is it the big corporations?*

*Is it the left-wing liberals, right-wing conservatives*

*Is it immigrants?*

*- Bible says the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart*

*- moral and spiritual personal failure*

*- When writing to the Times on the subject of what is wrong with the world: [citation needed] "Dear Sir, I am, your sincerely, G. K. Chesterton"*

# What is sin?

0. Introduction

1. Revelation of sin

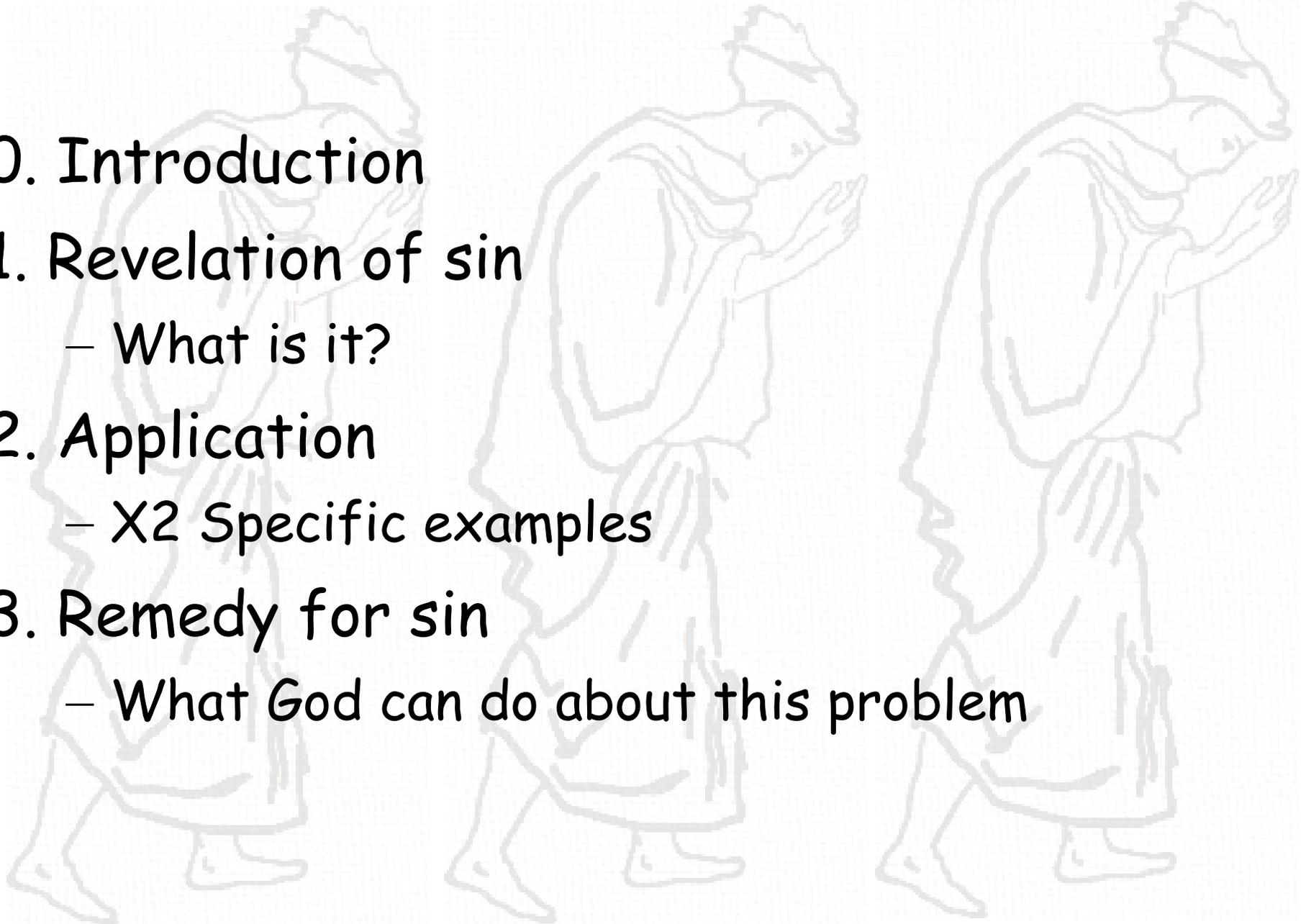
- What is it?

2. Application

- X2 Specific examples

3. Remedy for sin

- What God can do about this problem



# What is sin?

## 0. introduction:

### The deep moral and spiritual failure of human beings

- This is of fundamental importance for the Christian gospel - a dismal subject, but without it we cannot have the joy of sins forgiven!
  - A gospel that does not warn sinners of God's wrath against sin is no gospel at all!
- it's a profound mystery
  - i.e. none of us is going to get to the bottom of this ...
  - Almost unbearable contradiction between human beings in the image of God ... and human beings in sinful rebellion against God
  - Explain re. Society, psychology, nature, nurture, blame, fault??
  - ==> bottom line, confess: "God have mercy on me a sinner"

# What is sin?

## 0. introduction:

### The deep moral and spiritual failure of human beings

#### Multiple layers and descriptions and images

- Sickness, infection, blindness, deafness, lameness, corruption, deadness, twisted-ness, disobedience, overstepping boundaries, fundamental irreverence
- Outward acts, inward thoughts, perceptions and motivations
- Open sins and secret sins
- Goes right to the heart of the being of human beings
- Sin has a horizontal dimension (sociology) - we have neighbours ...
- Sin has a vertical dimension (theology) - we are in relation to our caring, giving Creator ...
- Sin can be thought of as "man curved in on himself"
- Sin can be thought legally of as "lack of submission to holy God's law"
- Sin can be thought of as worship of created rather than our glorious Creator

It affects all cultures, all ages, all social groups (though in different ways)

– N.B. Jew and Gentile (non-Jew)

==> since our first parent(s): if you are human, you are sinner - even if you are in your mother's womb

==> humiliation for sin cannot be avoided or excepted

==> the only exception was Jesus!

# What is sin?

## 1. Revelation of sin

- Without God's revelation we only have a very sketchy idea of what sin is.
  - e.g. currently recognised sins "discrimination", "being liberal", "damaging the planet e.g. by eating meat, or burning coal" "extremism"
  - e.g. "only a few people are bad, the rest are good"
  - e.g. "I'm not as bad as him/her/them ..."
  - e.g. "I've never sinned" - quiet but intolerable human pride
- N.B. The Holy Spirit convicts of sin and leads to the Saviour
- N.B. Satan accuses of sin - and leads away from hope and forgiveness

# What is sin?

## 1. Revelation of sin (b)

God reasons with people to show them their sin

e.g Isaiah chapter 1

- *v.2 ingratitude of children*
- *v.2 rebellion of children*
- *v.3 stupidity and denseness about the facts*
- *v.4 burden of guilt*
- *v.4 pattern of life*
- *v.4 way of relating to God, [and what he says]*
  - *Forsaken, spurned, turned backs*
- *v.10 need to listen to what God says*
- *v.10-15 contradiction between religious rites and relational wrongs*
  - *Sacrifices, attendances, holy days, feast, prayers PLUS selfishness, cruelty, hard-heartedness about other people especially those in need*
- *v.18 come let us reason together ...*
  - ==> spoken to a very specific situation (ancient days, Israel)
  - ==> but we 21C, UK, + church ppl, are in no truly different situation

# What is sin?

## 2. Application of sin (a)

Isaiah 59:1-8 (esp 7,8)

Compare Romans 3:9-18

Question: is he saying that every single person is a murderer who does not fear God?

Answer: the quote is from that part of Isaiah where he is considering the depths of Israel's plight

- e.g. why in Babylon?
- e.g. when we return geographically how much will have changed spiritually?
- ==> the deep problem of the sinful heart remains
- ==> Paul's point - the spiritually educated Jew (who has the law) and the ignorant Gentile - BOTH are sinners
- *"by God's grace no human being is [yet] as bad as we could be, yet apart from God's grace sin affects us to the very core"*
- ==> deeply humiliating for us all

# What is sin?

## 2. Application of sin (b)

Matthew 13:14-17

Quoting Isaiah 6:8-10

Question: what is Jesus saying??

Answer: Isaiah's heart-felt calling to his own people only had the effect of hardening most of them

BUT/AND - hardening was the pathway for future hope (6:13 "stump")

- Thus Jesus' ministry was not accepted by the nation as a whole → his death → hope for the world
- ==> let us fear hardness of heart!
- ==> let us be confident that even hardening does not defeat God's ultimate purposes

# What is sin?

## 3. Remedy for sin

Isaiah 1:18 **scarlet** → **white**

N.B. Things said and not said

*a. there can be full and wonderful cleansing from sin*

– The vilest offender ...

*b. there needs to be a turning of the life away from sin = repentance*

– true faith = repenting faith

– Spiritual turning is needed, but cannot be achieved without spirit- power!

– Repentance is the flip side of regeneration (i.e. born again / new heart)

# What is sin?

## 3. Remedy for sin

Isaiah 1:18 scarlet → white

Things said and **not said**

*a. what is the basis for full and wonderful cleansing from sin*

- God's indifference? No!
- Animal sacrifices? Not really!
- A Person who deals with God's wrath

*b. what sort of change does God make in the human heart?*

- Turning from resistance and rebellion (1:20)
- v.27 there will be redemption and turning
- 4:2 the survivors will be fruitful and glorious

Q: How?

- A: By the work of the Holy Spirit in the human heart
- “you must be born again, by the watery Spirit” John 3
- That is the need of the sinner and the gift of God

# What is sin?

## 4. Conclusion - what sort of sinner are you?

- like ancient Israel: blind, self-confident stupid sinner ...  
deceived by your own self and your religion?
  - Come now!
- like the Gentiles: ignorant, crude, gross behaviour sinner?
  - Come now!
- like the leaders: hard-hearted - the more they heard the less they took notice!
  - Come now!
- like the few who said: God have mercy on me a sinner!
  - Come now!
- a turning sinner: *I have turned, but every day I turn again from my sin to my Saviour, every day I confess my sins, every day I thank him for the promises of forgiveness, and I look forward to the day when sin will vex me and trip me no more, when I see his face!*