

at God's righteous law. Samuel rebukes them in the strongest language. Yet he says I would sin against the Lord if I failed to pray for you. How much suffering do people have, how much misery is there, how much is the work of God held back because God's people do not pray as they ought? ~~z~~ The sin of failing to pray. Certainly one of the most deadly of all sins. Oh may God deliver us from it.

We notice then the deadliness of sin. Many years ago when the vaccines we have now and many of the means of doing away with some of our worst diseases were not yet available, my father was a physician in a ~~maxxxxx~~-mining town in northern Michigan. At that time diphtheria and scarlet fever and certain diseases like that that have been to quite an extent conquered ~~not~~ now were very very light. It was customary when someone had one of these diseases the doctor would call the health officer and the officer would put a sign over the door ~~x~~ naming the disease and the house was quarantined. No one was to go in or ~~z~~ out. The grocery man could come and deposit food on the front door steps and the people could step out and get the food. No one but the doctor was to go in or out.

Now there was a bunk house in that mining town where about 60 miners lived. One of these men said, That man in that house where they have the sign up that there is diphtheria and you are not to go in, he's a good friend of mine. He lonesome in there, he and his family. I want to see him. I won't get diphtheria. I'm immune to diphtheria." So when no one was looking at night he would sneak in through the back door and spend a couple of hours in this place. He did that two or three nights running. He didn't get diphtheria, but he carried the germs on his clothes back to the bunk house and 40 men got it and 20 of them died.

Look out for number one. Do what I feel like. Who cares about the health laws? Who cares about God's law. The deadliness of sin. The wages of sin is death.

This verse also brings out the penalty ~~f~~ of sin. What is the penalty of sin? Here there is an equality between the two parts of the verse. The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life. Eternal life isn't something that is just handed to you. It is living, it is living eternally. What is the opposite of living eternally? Does death mean just cessation?

I was reading about a general who became emperor of the Byzantine empire in the 12th century. There as emperor he aroused a great hatred against himself by a large part of the population. There came an uprising against him. Many people stuck knives into him but did not hit any vital spot. For three days he was held there with the people taunting him, ridiculing him, throwing things at him. Then they hung him upside down by his legs. They hung him there and there he hung in terrible misery. The Encyclopedia Britannica says that a Latin soldier took pity on him and mercifully killed him. The dying that comes from sin is not a sudden freeing of release from misery. It is eternal dying. It goes on and on and on.

What else would be proper for saying ~~th~~ of God's law, I'm not interested in it. I'm interested only in No. 1. It is eternal dying. We think of Lady Macbeth as Shakespeare describes her, thinking back to the murder of King Duncan, going through the motions of pretending to wash her hands and saying, All the water in ~~the~~ all the sea cannot wash these hands clean. Eternal dying the penalty of sin.