

THE LITTLE FOXES — LITTLE “NO-HARM” SINS

TEXT:

Song of Songs 2:15: Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

CONTEXT:

Luke 13:31-32:

³¹ The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto Him [Jesus], Get Thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill Thee.

³² And He said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

THEME: Warning Against So-called “No Harm” Sins

INTRODUCTION:

God’s Word, the Bible, is a spiritual book. In order to instruct us in spiritual truths with which we are very unfamiliar, God will select something from nature to illustrate the spiritual truth, and thus make it much easier for us to understand what He is declaring unto us.

As in the case of our text, little foxes are a threat to grapevines. They will come into vineyards when the grapes are just beginning to form on the vines and the sap is beginning to flow, and they will nibble at the vines to get the sap out. Thus, the vines will bleed so that the sap can’t flow up to the grapes, and they will soon perish.



If a husbandman is not familiar with the traits of these little foxes, he may tolerate them in his vineyard, thinking they are so small and that they mostly prey on mice

and other rodents. As a result, they will leave them alone; that is, until he finds out what those little foxes have done to his grapevines.

Spiritually, God calls the children of Israel a choice vine which He brought out of Egypt, and Jesus' parables of the vines and vineyards illustrate how wisely the Lord selected the little foxes as a threat to the spiritual vineyard, also.



Psalms 80:8-9:

8 Thou hast brought a **vine** out of Egypt: Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.

9 Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.

Psalms 80:13-14:

13 The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.

14 Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from Heaven, and behold, and visit this **vine**;

Isaiah 5:1-2:

1 Now will I sing to my well **beloved** a song of my **beloved** touching his **vineyard**. My well **beloved** hath a **vineyard** in a very fruitful hill:

2 And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest **vine**, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.



Matthew 20:1: For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his **vineyard**.

John 15:1-2:

1 I am the true **vine**, and My Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Hosea 10:1: Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images.

Joel 1:5-7:

⁵ Awake, ye drunkards, and weep; and howl, all ye drinkers of wine, because of the new wine; for it is cut off from your mouth.

⁶ For a nation is come up upon My land, strong, and without number, whose teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the cheek teeth of a great lion.

⁷ He hath laid My vine waste, and barked My fig tree: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.

Who or what are these little foxes that we are warned to take, lest they spoil our vines?

The vines refer to the children of God, and the little foxes refer to those so-called little "no harm" sins. When we learn more about the nature and characteristics of little foxes and foxes as a whole, we will see the Divine wisdom in this illustration.

The vines have reference to the children of God,

The Lord Jesus knows very well the chief characteristics of foxes. After all, He is the One Who created them in the first place. He placed within their nature certain instincts which — when discovered — will enable us to take due care and heed His instructions about foxes.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FOXES

Foxes are the most crafty, clever, cunning, and sly of all beasts of prey.

- Foxes are considered the most intelligent of all fur-bearing animals. They look like a miniature dog, but their natural instincts are much more like that of a cat. According to S. J. Grabill, foxes are the most crafty, clever, cunning, and sly of all beasts of prey.
- Foxes are known for their cleverness in mimicking other earthly creatures:

A fox will mimic the bleating of a sheep or lamb that is lost.

A fox will squeal like an injured rabbit.

A fox will squeak like a mouse or rat that's injured.

A fox will bark just like the family pet dog.

A fox will quack just like the quacking of ducks.

Why?

In bleating like a sheep or lamb, the mother or other sheep will come to the aid of the distressed. Then the fox will catch it.



The squealing like an injured rabbit, and the squealing like a mouse or rat, is for the same reason.

The barking like the family pet dog is its clever way of disarming the family chickens from fleeing when it makes its appearance to catch them. This is their clever way of luring their prey to themselves. They like to catch chickens because they are much easier to capture.

This is what King Herod sought to do to the Lord Jesus. That is why Jesus referred to Herod as a fox:

Luke 13:31-32:

31 The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto Him, Get Thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill Thee.

32 And He said unto them, Go ye, and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to day and to morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.

THE RED (OR YELLOWISH RED) FOX

A naturalist who was studying the characteristics of foxes reports this fox doing one of the most clever feats I have ever heard. He came to a stream where an old tree had fallen over into the stream. Dogs were pursuing him, so he walked on that tree trunk most of the way across, then leaped down into the flowing stream and swam the rest of the way across.



When the hounds came up to the tree, they smelled the scent and followed it onto the log and proceeded across. Then finding no more scent, they vainly sniffed to pick it up. Finally they had to give up because the stream had carried the scent down the river, and they lost it.

Reports by R. Burrow, Henry, and Leonard Lee Reu, who as a team sought to discover more about the rare nature of the fox, found that when a pack of dogs has caught the scent of the fox, they will start barking and running its trail. The fox will outwit them by backtracking and crisscrossing its own path so that the dogs become confused and don't know which trail to follow.

Foxes walk a crooked path. They never walk a straight course. They meander about to the right and left with many windings and turnings. Sin is that way also, causing its victims to walk a crooked path.

Another device which they use as well is that they often burrow into the ground to make their dens. Foxes will generally select a hilltop for their dens, or some knoll or mound, then will make at least three or four exits and entrances. Sometimes if the hill is big enough, there will be upwards to 10 or 12. When a dog finally tracks the fox down to its hole — the den — he has to enlarge the hole in order to crawl into it. While this is going on, the fox will take one of the exits and escape out the opposite end.



Have you heard the expression "sly as a fox"? Listen. When being tracked, they use another unique method of avoiding capture. If there are sheep in the pasture near their den, they will run and jump on the sheep's back, riding it for a space, then jump off and go on their merry way, thus avoiding their scent from being picked up by the hounds.

Another of their favorite devices to escape capture by dogs is that they will walk on stone walls, fence rails, or even climb trees as high as 25 feet, then jump to the next wall, rail, or tree before returning to the ground, thus breaking the tracking center from the dogs.¹

If pestered by vultures or buzzards flying overhead, they will outwit these birds of

¹ Red Fox by Leonard Lee Reu

prey by lying down on the ground, stretch out, even hang out their tongue, their eyes set and staring into space. The birds of prey will think that it is dead and will swoop down to gorge themselves on its flesh. Suddenly the fox will jump up, pounce upon its adversary, and take it captive. It plays dead.



Along these lines, a fox trapper was outwitted by a fox which had been caught in his trap. It played dead when the trapper came around to get him out of the trap. The trapper, supposing it dead, opened the trap, pulled him out, and cast him aside while he set the trap. Suddenly, the fox ran quickly to its feet and ran off.

Foxes represent people in so many of these ways.

This same author said that foxes provide the greatest challenge to fox trappers. They will crisscross their own tracks, make circles, and even come up far behind a pack of dogs pursuing them, remaining at a safe distance in the rear.

In Stutman Country, N.D., two biologists were flying in their light plane when noticing a fox traveling toward a sheep carcass. The fox began harassing a badger which had discovered it first and was feeding on it. The fox began harassing, aggravating, and irritating the badger until it started chasing the fox away. When the fox got some 150 - 200 feet away, it quickly doubled back and — being much faster in travel — outran the badger back to its prey, and devoured part of it before the badger could get back to it. These biologists did note that the fox used this very same ploy at least five or six times before sauntering off. I guess you could call this badgering a badger.

Foxes represent people in so many of these ways. That is why our Lord Jesus called king Herod "that fox", for foxes are the most clever, cunning, and crafty of the fur animals.

False cults and false prophets are much like foxes which prey on babes in Christ to take them captive, as well as on those that are really ignorant of their devices. Jesus warned us against these false prophets in **Matthew 7:15-16:**

False cults and false prophets are much like foxes which prey on babes in Christ.

Matthew 7:15-16:

15 Beware of *false prophets*, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Galatians 2:4: And that because of *false brethren* unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

Ezekiel 13:3-4, 10, 16:

3 Thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe unto the *foolish prophets*, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!

4 O Israel, thy *prophets* are like the *foxes* in the deserts.

10 Because, even because they have *seduced* My people, saying, Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and, lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar:

16 To wit, the *prophets* of Israel which prophesy concerning Jerusalem, and which see visions of peace for her, and there is no peace, saith the Lord GOD.

Matthew 24:4-5:

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man *deceive* you.

5 For many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ; and shall *deceive* many.

1 Timothy:

1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to *seducing spirits*, and *doctrines of devils*;

2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

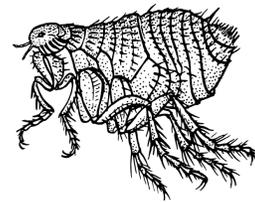
Revelation 2:14-15:

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac [Balak] to cast a stumbling block before the Children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

Ephesians 4:14: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

A fox has a clever way to get rid of fleas. It will wade out into a stream with a big leaf, or a stick, or a piece of a tree branch in its mouth. It goes out deeper and deeper until its nose is barely above the water. There it stands while the fleas are trying to stay ahead of the water by traveling on the fox's body in the direction of the dry area which is toward the head. Then the fox lowers its head into the water so that the fleas keep traveling up onto the leaf, stick, or branch as a refuge from being drowned. Then the fox lets go of the branch, or leaf, or stick which flows down the stream with its cargo of fleas. Then, leaving the water, the fox will shake himself briskly to get shed of the water, and goes on his way free from those pests.



This is sufficient background to our text to prepare you for the heart of this message. Read the text again:

Song of Songs 2:15: Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

THE SUBJECT IS: THOSE LITTLE “NO HARM”, SO-CALLED SINS

I. THE SLY LITTLE FOX OF SELFISHNESS, SHOWNG OFF, FONDNESS OF SELF-DISPLAY

Selfishness is one of those least detected or suspected little sins which is not considered dangerous by most people. It is so little and is infecting so many people that it is seldom detected until the damage has been done to us and others, spiritually.

SELFISHNESS means: a person living wholly for his own self. A self-centered person is full of pride and self-esteem. The self loves to show off and is fond of self-display. Self does this to attract attention, and in so doing is inviting the praise of man, and flattery over his capabilities. (The world has a term for this called OSTENTATIOUS.)



This little fox is not considered so dangerous by most people because most of us are somewhat guilty of committing this little sin to some lesser degree. A selfish person is living just for self, and disregards everyone else. Self longs for first place and will even crowd anyone out who seems to be a rival. It feeds on self-praise or on the praises of others.

Preachers oftentimes have this, for you hear them say:

- *When I preached, the people were spellbound.*
- *When I prayed, the power of God fell, and the Glory came down.*
- *When I gave the altar call, the altars were filled with seekers.*
- *When I got under the anointing real good, the saints got excited and began to shout.*

This little (so-called) no-harm sin is ugly and disgusting because it robs God of the Glory which is past due to His High and Holy Name. It even causes people to pray, only to be heard by mankind. It sings loudly, only to be heard by the most people, to show off, and to attract attention to one's self. It gives money to be seen, and it worships to attract attention to self.

The Bible tells us:

2 Timothy 3:1-2:

1 This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

2 For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

WHAT IS GOD'S REMEDY TO THIS BESETTING SIN, THIS LITTLE FOX WHICH SPOILS THE VINES?

Remember, VINES in the Bible are a type of PEOPLE, as we showed you with the many scriptures in the Bible which set this forth.

SELF-DENIAL IS AN EXCELLENT REMEDY.

Matthew 16:24: Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him **deny himself**, and **take up his cross**, and **follow Me**.

Mark 8:34: And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will **come after Me**, let him **deny himself**, and **take up his cross**, and **follow Me**.



Luke 9:23: And He said to them all, If any man will **come after Me**, let him **deny himself**, and **take up his cross daily**, and **follow Me**.

Galatians 5:24: And they that are Christ's have **crucified the flesh** with the affections and lusts.

Galatians 2:20: **I am crucified with Christ:** nevertheless I live; yet not I, but **Christ liveth in me:** and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

Ephesians 4:22-24:

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And **be renewed in the spirit of your mind;**

24 And that ye **put on the new man**, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Philippians 2:2-4:

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

II. SELFISH LOVE

Parents manifest this little fox toward their children when they cover up or justify

them in their sins when they should, instead, be removing them. Eli did this when his sons made themselves vile while serving in the Temple, and he did not restrain them.

1 Samuel 3:13: For I [The Lord] have told him [Eli] that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.

III. SHOWING RESPECT OF PERSONS

James 2:1, 9:

1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with *respect of persons*.

9 But if ye have *respect to persons*, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

Acts 10:34: Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no *respector of persons*:

Leviticus 19:15: Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment: thou shalt not *respect the person* of the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbour.

This so-called little "no harm" sin has a destroying effect in families, churches, and society. A respector of persons will show FAVORITISM and PREJUDICE, and is very SELFISH. If someone in our family does well, we like to brag, boast, and push him forward, and disregard everyone else. If someone in our family does wrong, we will excuse, justify, and make allowances for him when we would not do this for others.

IV. LITTLE FOXES OF TATTLING, TALE-BEARING, GOSSIPING, CRITICIZING, AND FAULTFINDING



This sly little fox will start small fires which will soon get out of control and destroy the home, the church, and ruin the reputation of others. It breeds hatred, strife, and causes divisions. It is a deadly and destructive fox which spoils the vines or the people of God, as the Bible defines vines.

It has wrecked churches, destroyed homes, driven ministers out of the pulpit, separated friends, and caused discord and disunity. No wonder the Holy Spirit warns us in **James 3:6** that the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity.

James 3:5-6:

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

Leviticus 19:16: Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the LORD.

1 Timothy 5:13: And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.

Psalms 34:13: Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.

1 Peter 2:1-3:

1 Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

V. THE LITTLE FOX OF JEALOUSY AND ENVY

This fox — this seemingly little so-called “no harm” sin — is one of the most destructive of the carnal nature. This sin starts little, like a little fox, but it is deadly and destructive, both in the home and in the church. If you're wondering why I have combined these two, it is because they are twins. They are part of one another.

JEALOUSY

Jealousy differs from envy in that it is the very reverse of envy. It manifests itself the same as envy, but from a different point of view. In jealousy, a person who

possesses valuable attributes or possessions fears a loss of them to another person. They will try to safeguard either their wife, husband, position, job, or possessions by cruelly striking out at the seeming or actual offender.



Example: My wife was a pretty women, and many men tried to cut in on our happy marriage. It was hard to keep from hurting or insulting such a person. However, bad attitudes can develop, and we can lose out with God over jealousy.

Numbers 5:14-15:

14 And the spirit of **jealousy** come upon him, and he be **jealous** of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of **jealousy** come upon him, and he be **jealous** of his wife, and she be not defiled:

15 Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of **jealousy**, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance.

Song of Songs 8:6: Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; **jealousy** is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.

Deuteronomy 32:16-17:

16 They provoked Him to **jealousy** with strange gods, with abominations provoked they Him to anger.

17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not.

Proverbs 6:34: For **jealousy** is the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance.

Romans 11:11: I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to **jealousy**.

2 Corinthians 11:2: For I am **jealous** over you with godly **jealousy**: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste

virgin to Christ.

Jealousy is a weakness which often leads to other sinful deeds such as injuring another person physically, or injuring the reputation of the person by slander. Jealousy often speaks in a whisper, or by dirty looks, or by cold shouldering, or by criticisms of a very subtle nature.

- **Jealousy caused king Saul to throw a javelin at David in an attempt to murder him.**

1 Samuel 18:6-9:



6 And it came to pass as they came, when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women came out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of musick.

7 And the women answered one another as they played, and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

8 And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him; and he said, They have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed but thousands: and what can he have more but the kingdom?

9 And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.

1 Samuel 18:11: And Saul cast the javelin; for he said, I will smite David even to the wall with it. And David avoided out of his presence twice.



- **It caused king Herod to order the slaying of thousands of Jewish babies when he sought to have the Lord Jesus Christ slain when He was a baby in Mary's arms.**

Matthew 2:1-3, 16

1 Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of

***Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,
2 Saying, Where is He that is born King of
the Jews? for we have seen His star in the
east, and are come to worship Him.
3 When Herod the king had heard these
things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem
with him.***



Matthew 2:7-8, 16

***7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them
diligently what time the star appeared.***

***8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for
the young child; and when ye have found Him, bring me word again, that
I may come and worship Him also.***

***12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to
Herod, they departed into their own country another way.***



***16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of
the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth,
and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem,
and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and
under, according to the time which he had diligently
enquired of the wise men.***

ENVY

Envy, on the other hand, is wishing we had what someone else possesses. The other person may have a good position, a good reputation, wealth, beauty or handsomeness, poise, a pleasant personality, a lovely mate, a beautiful home, etc. An envious person begrudges him having any of these things, and he will try to either get them away from him, or ruin or mar what he has.

EXAMPLES:

- **Envy turned Lucifer into satan, and angels into demons.**

Isaiah 14:12-14:

12 How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into Heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

- **Envy turned Cain into a murderer.**

Genesis 4:3-8:

3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

4 And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

5 But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen?

7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

8 And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.



- **Isaac had possessions of flocks, herds, and a great store of servants, and the Philistines envied him. The Philistines stopped all his wells and filled them with earth.**

Genesis 26:14-15:

14 For he had possession of flocks, and possession of herds, and great store of servants: and the Philistines **envied him.**

15 For all the wells which his father's servants had digged in the

days of Abraham his father, the Philistines had stopped them, and filled them with earth.

- **Rachel envied her sister Leah.**

*Genesis 30:1: And when Rachel saw that she bare Jacob no children, Rachel **envied** her sister; and said unto Jacob, Give me children, or else I die.*

- **The brothers of Joseph envied him because of the coat of many colors his father made for him, and Jacob loved him above the other children.**

Genesis 37:3-4, 11:

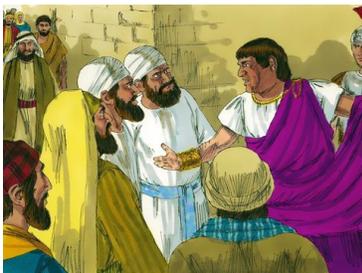
3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colours.

4 And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto him.

*11 And his brethren **envied** him; but his father observed the saying.*



- **Pilate knew that for envy they had delivered Jesus to be crucified.**



Matthew 27:17-18:

17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

*18 For he knew that for **envy** they had delivered Him.*

- **The princes of Babylon envied Daniel and his position which caused them to plot his overthrow by slyly setting a trap to have him thrown into the lions' den.**

Daniel 6:1-10:

1 It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty

*princes, which should be over the whole kingdom;
2 And over these three presidents; of whom Daniel was first: that the
princes might give accounts unto them, and the king should have no
damage.*

*3 Then this Daniel was preferred above the presidents and princes,
because an excellent spirit was in him; and the king thought to set
him over the whole realm.*

*4 Then the presidents and princes sought to
find occasion against Daniel concerning the
kingdom; but they could find none occasion
nor fault; forasmuch as he was faithful,
neither was there any error or fault found in
him.*



*5 Then said these men, We shall not find any
occasion against this Daniel, except we find it against him
concerning the law of his God.*

*6 Then these presidents and princes assembled together to the king,
and said thus unto him, king Darius, live for ever.*

*7 All the presidents of the kingdom, the governors, and the princes,
the counsellors, and the captains, have consulted together to
establish a royal statute, and to make a firm decree, that whosoever
shall ask a petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of thee, O
king, he shall be cast into the den of lions.*

*8 Now, O king, establish the decree, and sign the writing, that it be
not changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which
altereth not.*



*9 Wherefore king Darius signed the writing
and the decree.*

*10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing
was signed, he went into his house; and his
windows being open in his chamber toward
Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three
times a day, and prayed,*

and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.

*11 Then these men assembled, and found Daniel praying and making
supplication before his God.*

*12 Then they came near, and spake before the king concerning the
king's decree; Hast thou not signed a decree, that every man that shall*

ask a petition of any God or man within thirty days, save of thee, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions? The king answered and said, The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

13 Then answered they and said before the king, That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day.



14 Then the king, when he heard these words, was sore displeased with himself, and set his heart on Daniel to deliver him: and he laboured till the going down of the sun to deliver him.

15 Then these men assembled unto the king, and said unto the king, Know, O king, that the law of the Medes and Persians is, That no

decree nor statute which the king establisheth may be changed.

16 Then the king commanded, and they brought Daniel, and cast him into the den of lions. Now the king spake and said unto Daniel, Thy God Whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee.

17 And a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the king sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords; that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel.

18 Then the king went to his palace, and passed the night fasting: neither were instruments of musick brought before him: and his sleep went from him.

19 Then the king arose very early in the morning, and went in haste unto the den of lions.

20 And when he came to the den, he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel: and the king spake and said to Daniel, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, Whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?

21 Then said Daniel unto the king, O king, live for ever.

22 My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt.



23 Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God.



24 And the king commanded, and they brought those men which had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions, them, their children, and their wives; and the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den.

- **Korah, Dathan, and Abiram envied Moses and his position of honor, and tried to get it away from him.**

Numbers 16:1-3:

1 Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men:

2 And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:

3 And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

Psalm 106:16: They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the LORD.

Envy is a vicious sin, and it can creep into homes and churches. People envy another person's possessions, talents, abilities, or his being honored, and they are resentful of it. They will either try to get it away from the person, or they will discredit that person by causing him to leave the church, or they will become bitter and resentful, thereby finally losing out in the end.

Envy is a vicious sin, and it can creep into homes and churches.

VI. THE LITTLE FOX OF FLESHLY LUSTS

This is a very touchy area for any minister to expound upon. If I were to generalize in a cowardly fashion to escape resentment from those who are guilty of manifesting this little fox — lust, gluttony, surfeiting, drunkenness, chambering — then God would be displeased with me as His servant. I am to lift up my voice like a trumpet, cry aloud, and spare not. God said: Show My people their sin and the house of Jacob their transgressions.

GLUTTONY: eating too much and often too fast in a greedy manner so they can get more food before it is picked over, or before the supply is diminished.



Proverbs 23:2: *And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to **appetite**.*

Proverbs 23:20-21:

20 *Be not among **winebibbers**; among riotous eaters of flesh:*

21 *For the **drunkard** and the **glutton** shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags.*

Romans 16:17-18:

17 *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.*

18 *For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own **belly**; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*

Philippians 3:18-19:

18 *(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ:*

19 *Whose end is destruction, whose God is their **belly**, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)*

SURFEITING: Excessive eating or over-indulgence in food and drink.

Luke 21:34: *And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts*

be overcharged with **surfeiting**, and **drunkenness**, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

DRUNKENNESS: Intoxication, especially by alcohol

CHAMBERING: Sexual immortality and debauchery

*Romans 13:13: Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and **drunkenness**, not in **chambering** and wantonness, not in strife and envying.*



OBESE: grossly fat or overweight; corpulent; portly; fat.

*Deuteronomy 31:20: For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen **fat**; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke Me, and break My covenant.*

*Deuteronomy 32:15: But Jeshurun waxed **fat**, and kicked: thou art waxen **fat**, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with **fatness**; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.*

Nehemiah 9:25-26:

*25 And they took strong cities, and a fat land, and possessed houses full of all goods, wells digged, vineyards, and oliveyards, and fruit trees in abundance: so they did eat, and were filled, and became **fat**, and delighted themselves in thy great goodness.*

26 Nevertheless they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and cast thy law behind their backs, and slew thy prophets which testified against them to turn them to thee, and they wrought great provocations.

*Isaiah 10:16: Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among His **fat** ones leanness; and under His glory He shall kindle a burning like the burning of a fire.*

*Psalms 17:10: They are inclosed in their own **fat**: with their*



mouth they speak proudly.

Psalms 78:31-32:

31 The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the **fattest** of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel.

32 For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works.

The Bible says:

1 Peter 2:11: Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from **fleshly lusts**, which war against the soul;

Romans 13:14: But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the **flesh**, to fulfil the **lusts** thereof.

2 Peter 3:3-4:

3 Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own **lusts**,

4 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.

2 Peter 2:13-14:

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with **covetous practices**; cursed children:

ILLUSTRATIONS:

- ELI'S SONS served as priests in the Temple. However, they did not follow the Divine Law concerning the offerings that the people brought for their sin. They took portions of the meat to which they were not entitled, and even ate it raw.

1 Samuel 2:15-17:

15 Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw.

16 And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.

17 Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.



- Eli, the High Priest, was fat.

1 Samuel 4:18: And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God, that he [Eli] fell from off the seat backward by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died: for he was an old man, and heavy. And he had judged Israel forty years.

Deuteronomy 32:15: But Jeshurun² waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation.

2 Peter 2:13-15:

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

15 Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

² "This is a poetical name for Israel. The metaphor here used is derived from a pampered animal, which, instead of being tame and gentle, becomes mischievous and vicious, in consequence of good living and kind treatment. So did the Israelites conduct themselves by their various acts of rebellion, murmuring, and idolatrous apostasy." A Commentary: Critical, Experimental, and Practical on the Old and New Testaments. Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

Romans 1:24-27:

24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the *lusts* of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

26 For this cause God gave them up unto *vile affections*: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their *lust* one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

SUMMARY

Food, sex, drinking, and drugs are the four greater snares of the devil into which people indulge and overindulge.



REMEDY:

Galatians 5:16, 25

16 This I say then, *Walk in the Spirit*, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

25 If we *live in the Spirit*, let us also *walk in the Spirit*.

Ephesians 4:22-24:

22 That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

23 And *be renewed in the spirit of your mind*;

24 And that ye *put on the new man*, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Romans 13:14: But *put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Titus 2:11-12:

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should *live soberly, righteously, and godly*, in this present world;

2 Peter 1:4: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might *be partakers of the divine nature*, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

VII. THAT LITTLE FOX OF FEAR

Proverbs 29:25: The *fear* of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Matthew 8:26: And He saith unto them, Why are ye *fearful*, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

Acts 5:26: Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they *feared* the people, lest they should have been stoned.

Luke 20:19: And the chief priests and the the same hour sought to lay hands on Him; and they *feared* the people: for they perceived that He had spoken this parable against them.



Luke 21:26: Men's hearts failing them for *fear*, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

Isaiah 33:14: The sinners in Zion are *afraid; fearfulness* hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

REMEDY:

Hebrews 2:14-15:

14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He [Jesus Christ] also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He [Jesus Christ] might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

1 John 4:18: There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

Isaiah 35:4: Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; He will come and save you.

Isaiah 51:12-13:

12 I, even I, am He [Jesus Christ] that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass;

13 And forgettest the LORD thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth; and hast feared continually every day because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy? and where is the fury of the oppressor?

REMEMBER:

This little fox will spoil the vine slowly and surely, the sap of the Spirit will leak out, and we will be unfruitful and dry up on the stem.



VIII. LITTLE FOXES OF ANGER

This little fox includes getting mad, having a temper tantrum, blowing a fuse, and becoming irritated.

Matthew 5:22: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the

council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

*Ephesians 4:26: Be ye **angry**, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your **wrath**:*

*Ephesians 4:31: Let all bitterness, and **wrath**, and **anger**, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

*Colossians 3:8: But now ye also put off all these; **anger**, **wrath**, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*

*Colossians 3:21: Fathers, provoke not your children to **anger**, lest they be discouraged.*

*Titus 1:7: For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon **angry**, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;*

*Proverbs 14:17: He that is soon **angry** dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.*

*Proverbs 21:19: It is better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an **angry** woman.*

Proverbs 22:24-25:

*24 Make no friendship with an **angry** man; and with a **furious** man thou shalt not go:*

25 Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul.



*Ecclesiastes: Be not hasty in thy spirit to be **angry**: for **anger** resteth in the bosom of fools.*

IX. LITTLE FOXES OF POLITE CUSS WORDS

Slang, we call it, or bywords, may seem so innocent and harmless because they

are so commonly used, even among Christians. Little do we realize that they are the same as CURSING, but only in a moderate manner. Using such words as:

Heck, for Hell
Gee Wiz
Doggone It
Drad-draddit
Gosh
Darn it
By Golly
O Phooey

Today, television, radio, movies, and videos are more daring and vulgar, using profanity that was never permitted in our country, even in schools and at public meeting places. Men would never curse in front of women. Now both are bold and brazen in doing so.



X. THE LITTLE FIESTY FOX OF FIBBING, WHITE LIES, OR JUST KIDDING

Father Abraham was caught by one of these little feisty foxes, a so-called "no harm" sin. He told King Abimelech that Sarah was his sister instead of his wife. It was a half truth in that she was his half-sister, for both had the same father but not the same mother. This fib got him into hot water, and it will do the same to you.

Genesis 12:10-19:

10 And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.

11 And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon:

12 Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive.

13 Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee.



"Tell them you are my sister."

14 And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair.

15 The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house.

16 And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels.

17 And the LORD plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife.

18 And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife?

19 Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.



Pharaoh sends Abram and Sarai away.

How we can lie without hardly realizing it:

1 John 2:4: He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

1 John 2:22: Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

1 John 1:6: If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

GOD'S COMMANDMENT

Colossians 3:9: Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

PAY DAY FOR ALL LIARS

Revelation 21:8: But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all

liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Revelation 21:27: And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a **lie**: but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.

Revelation 22:15: For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a **lie**.

XI. THE LITTLE FOX OF PETTY LARCENY (STEALING)

If you know anything about foxes, they are predators, and they live off the possessions of farmers, especially chickens since they are easy to catch.

ILLUSTRATION:

Thieves will often use children to go through a transom³ or through milk shoots to open locked doors so the thief may enter.

Many young people will steal merchandise and sell it to buy drugs and alcohol. In adulthood, a like-manner of conduct is followed without any qualms, for the conscience was seared in childhood.



A child sneaking (thieving) a cookie, some candy, or a little change left on the dresser can be the beginning of a life of crime in adulthood.

XII. THE LITTLE FOX CALLED IMPATIENCE

Luke 21:19: In your **patience** possess ye your souls.

Hebrews 10:36: For ye have need of **patience**, that, after ye have done the Will of God, ye might receive the promise.

³ A horizontal crossbar in a window, over a door, or between a door and a window or fanlight above it. Merriam Webster Dictionary

Psalms 37:7: Rest in the LORD, and wait **patiently** for Him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Psalms 40:1: I waited **patiently** for the LORD; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry.

Ecclesiastes 7:8: Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the **patient** in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.

Luke 8:15: But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with **patience**.

Romans 2:7: To them who by **patient** continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

Hebrews 6:12: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and **patience** inherit the promises.

Isaiah 28:16b: he that believeth shall not make **haste**.

Ecclesiastes 5:2: Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be **hasty** to utter any thing before God: for God is in Heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

Ecclesiastes 7:9: Be not **hasty** in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

EXAMPLES:

- The Children of Israel became very impatient when Moses delayed coming back to them from Mount Horeb. Finally, when he was through communing with the Lord, he came down and found them worshipping a golden calf.

Exodus 32:1-6:

1 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.



2 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.

3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

4 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.

5 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.

6 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.



- A servant who had been forgiven his debt had no patience for a fellow servant who owed him money.

Matthew 18:26-30:

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have *patience* with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have *patience* with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

- Sarah became very impatient with the promise of God to give her a child, for she

was barren. She tried to help God out, and created a problem for herself and for all her descendants until this day.

Genesis 16:1-6:

1 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar.

2 And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai.

3 And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

4 And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

5 And Sarai said unto Abram, My wrong be upon thee: I have given my maid into thy bosom; and when she saw that she had conceived, I was despised in her eyes: the LORD judge between me and thee.

6 But Abram said unto Sarai, Behold, thy maid is in thy hand; do to her as it pleaseth thee. And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, she fled from her face.



- King Saul got in a hurry and became impatient waiting for the arrival of Samuel to offer the evening sacrifice and took matters into his own hand when it was only lawful for the priest to offer it up.

1 Samuel 13:8-14:

8 And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.

9 And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering.

10 And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him.

11 And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash;

12 Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.

13 And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which He commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever.

14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over His people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.



XIII. THE LITTLE FOXES OF JESTING, JOKING, BEING SILLY, & COMICAL

Ephesians 5:2-4:

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.

Proverbs 12:23: A prudent man concealeth knowledge: but the heart of fools proclaimeth foolishness.

Proverbs 24:9: The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men.

Mark 7:21-23:

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

ADMONITIONS TO BE SOBER-MINDED

Definition of Sober Minded: to be serious-minded, solemn; the absence of levity or silliness.

Definition of Jestng:

- Strong's Concordance: witticism, i.e. (in a vulgar sense) ribaldry :- jesting.
- Websters Dictionary: A joke, not to be taken seriously; taunting, teasing.

1 Timothy 3:2: A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

1 Timothy 3:8: Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;

Titus 2:2: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

Titus 2:6: Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

NOTE: Carnal-minded people enjoy levity, joking, jesting, teasing, and being silly, and — even if reprov'd — pass it off by saying: “I was just kidding”, or “I don't see anything wrong with having fun”.

XIV. THE LITTLE FOX OF TOUCHINESS — BEING EASILY OFFENDED

Present-day church members are often plagued by people with a touchy spirit. They seem to get easily offended at the least drop of a pin and are ready to quit the church and go back into the world.

QUESTION: What is TOUCHINESS?

ANSWER: It is a weak state of being easily offended. When people are overly

sensitive, they have to be handled gingerly with “kid gloves”. Touchiness is like wearing the nerves of the body on the tissue-paper skin of the body.

EXAMPLES OF HOW IT MANIFESTS ITSELF

If people are not invited to a party or a meeting which they think they should be at, they feel slighted and offended.

If they are not spoken to when entering the sanctuary, they feel ignored and are offended.

If they are bypassed when a position is opened in the church which they were desirous of obtaining, they are disappointed, hurt, irritated, and sullen.

If they are not praised from the pulpit for some service rendered or a good deed done, they are hurt and puffed up.

If their talents or abilities are not recognized, or if they are not invited to sing, teach, or head up some committee, they get puffed up and mope around.

If the preacher steps on their toes in his sermon, they resent him and get miffed.

If they are rebuked, reprovved, or corrected for some inconsistencies in their life, they pout.

Psalms 119:165: Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

REMEDY:

A good case of old-fashioned Bible sanctification, self crucifixion, and infilling with the Holy Ghost will cause touchiness to cease.

Galatians 2:20: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I

live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

The cause of touchiness is PRIDE. For it is humility that preserves the life, and not pride. When a humble person is slighted, reprov'd, ignored, or not recognized, he is able to maintain a sweet, kind, and meek spirit. Why? Because SELF is dead.

Psalms 119:165: Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

That is why one cannot be touchy by taking offense, often to imaginary offenses.

1 Corinthians 15:31: I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

Ecclesiastes 10:4: If the spirit of the ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place; for yielding pacifieth great offences.

1 Corinthians 8:13: Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

Proverbs 18:19: A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle.

XV. SUNDAY DESECRATION

Sunday has become FUN-Day, a work day, a recreation day, a shopping day. What does God's Word have to say about this?

Isaiah 58:13: If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

Exodus 20:8, 11:

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

THE SUNDAY NEWSPAPER

The Sunday newspaper is a Sabbath desecration which burglarizes the soul and robs the Christian of his needed rest. It nipples away at his spirit with polluted cesspool scandals and many unmentionable deeds of the wicked to turn our minds off the things which are spiritual.

This little thief robs many thousands of composers⁴, pressmen, and newsboys by the thousands to be cheated of this day of rest, and hinders them from attending the House of the Lord.



Family worship is squashed when the family head reads the Sunday newspaper. Also, how can a family head who comes to church — having spent his morning with the newspaper and having his mind full of that garbage — do any good in the worship service?

Men used to shut their shops on Saturday nights, stop business, and go home. Now, most of the ads in the newspapers show the biggest sales on Sunday to help entice you to desecrate the Lord's Day by shopping. You may think of calling me one of those old-fashioned fanatical Puritans, but I'd rather be called a Puritan than a prodigal.

Sunday desecrations will make your life barren and worthless for the cause of Christ. A Christian is not a dead stick, but a living branch in the Vine which is Christ. You are supposed to bear fruit. You may ask: "*Preacher, what is this fruit I am supposed to bear?*" The Word of God in **Galatians 5:22-23** calls it the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus also calls it souls which we are to win to Him by our testimony.

Galatians 5:21-23:

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

⁴ A person who arranges type for printing or keys text into a printing machine.

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,
23 Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.**

John 15:5, 8, 16:

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much **fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing.**

8 Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much **fruit; so shall ye be My disciples.**

16 Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth **fruit, and that your **fruit** should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My name, He may give it you.**



James 5:7: Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious **fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.**

When I am abiding in Christ, my life will produce love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (self-control). That is quite different from the fruit born by sinners. See **Galatians 5:19-21** for that miserable list.

Galatians 5:19-21:

19 Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these;

Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

20 Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

21 Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.

XVI. HOLDING GRUDGES

Definition of Grudge:

According to Strong's Concordance, the word grudge in Hebrew (גִּטְרָה) means: to cherish (anger): bear grudge.

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary it means: *a feeling of deep-seated resentment or ill will.*

James 5:9: *Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.*

Leviticus 19:18: *Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.*

XVII. UNFORGIVING SPIRIT

An unforgiving spirit is a little fox that has serious eternal consequences: if a person does not repent of it, it will take him to Hell. Because Jesus forgave us all of our sins, we are commanded to forgive others. He clearly stated that if we do not forgive others, then we, ourselves, will not be forgiven.

Matthew 6:12, 15:

12 *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

15 *But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

Mark 11:25-26:

25 *And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses.*

26 *But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in Heaven forgive your trespasses.*

Matthew 18:35: *So likewise shall My heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.*

XVIII. DOUBT AND UNBELIEF

Doubting is a subtle little fox that spoils the vines. The only thing the devil ever created is DOUBT and UNBELIEF. Are you aware of that? Then you will not entertain these sly foxes, for they will surely spoil your fruit bearing.

The only thing
the devil ever
created is doubt
and unbelief.

Matthew 14:31: *And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou **doubt**?*

Matthew 21:21: *Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and **doubt** not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.*

Matthew 28:17: *And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some **doubted**.*

Mark 11:23: *For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not **doubt** in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.*

Luke 12:29: *And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of **doubtful** mind.*

Romans 14:23 : *And he that **doubteth** is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*

1 Timothy 2:8: *I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and **doubting**.*

XIX. WORDLY PLEASURES

The Bible has much to say about the dangers of this little fox, and how worldly pleasures hinder Christians from bearing fruit. What are some of these little foxes?

- **The Cares of This World**

Luke 8:14: *And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are **choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.***

- **The Deceitfulness of Riches**

Matthew 13:22: *He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the **deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.***

- **The Pleasures of This Life**

Luke 8:14: *And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are **choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.***

1 Timothy 5:6: *But she that liveth in **pleasure is dead while she liveth.***

2 Timothy 3:4: *Traitors, heady, highminded, **lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;***

Hebrews 11:25: *Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the **pleasures of sin for a season;***

XX. GREEDINESS FOR GAIN

Foxes are very greedy predators. Dr. Johnston, a friend of mine, told me he had a friend who was raising them for their fur. One got out and went after their chickens, killing over 30 of them. The fox figured that he would catch and kill all he could while the catching was good. Then he carried them off and buried them for future consumption.



Proverbs 1:19: *So are the ways of every one that is **greedy of gain;***

which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.

*Proverbs 15:27: He that is **greedy of gain** troubleth his own house; but he that hateth gifts shall live.*

*Proverbs 21:26: He **coveteth greedily** all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not.*

*Proverbs 28:8: He that by usury and **unjust gain** increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.*

Proverbs 28:20, 22:

*20 A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh **haste to be rich** shall not be innocent.*

*22 He that **hasteth to be rich** hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.*

Isaiah 56:10-11:

10 His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.

*11 Yea, they are **greedy** dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his **gain**, from his quarter.*

*Ezekiel 22:12: In thee have they taken gifts to shed blood; thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast **greedily gained** of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me, saith the Lord GOD.*

*1 Timothy 3:3: Not given to wine, no striker, not **greedy** of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous;*

*1 Timothy 3:8: Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not **greedy** of filthy lucre;*

*Jude 1:11: Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran **greedily** after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.*

IN CONCLUSION:

There is only one way to deal with these so-called LITTLE FOXES or LITTLE NO-HARM SINS that spoil the vines. They must be put away, and Self (the old man/the carnal man) must be put to death, or else it will put us to death spiritually.

Galatians 5:24: And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

Colossians 3:5: Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

Romans 6:6: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Romans 6:16: Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Galatians 2:20: I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

The command given in the key text of this sermon — **Song of Songs 2:15** — is especially laid upon us who are ministers of the Gospel, e.g., to take the foxes, even the little foxes:

Song of Songs 2:15: Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

- First, we need to properly warn the people of God concerning the so-called little “no-harm” sins of the flesh and spirit. The Word of God says:

2 Corinthians 7:1: Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Hebrews 12:1: Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us *lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

- These little foxes are the SPOILERS. We should never underestimate the power of little vices — sins. We are to expose the deceitfulness of sin to all of you dear people of God, and its effect upon your hearts.

We should never underestimate the power of little vices — sins.

Hebrews 3:13: But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the *deceitfulness of sin.*

- The saints are to deal with these evils of the carnal nature themselves. The pastor cannot do what each individual is responsible for in his own individual life.

James 4:8: Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. *Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.*

- Christ is our Deliverer from every besetting sin and habit, and we need to turn to Him and rely upon His Holy Spirit to help us crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts.

Christ is our Deliverer from every besetting sin and habit.

Galatians 5:24: And they that are Christ's have *crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

Romans 8:13: For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do *mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

- Both ministers and saints are to fight to take these foxes — these little foxes — captive, and put them to death.

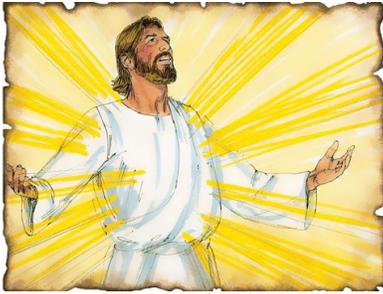
2 Corinthians 10:5: *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;*

Romans 6:6-17:

6 Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with Him**, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

7 For he that is dead is freed from sin.

8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him:



9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him.

10 For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God.

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but **alive unto**

God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but **yield yourselves unto God**, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For **sin shall not have dominion over you**: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

- As foxes delight in making prey out of the defenseless to satisfy their own lust and appetite, so is this the character of deceitful false prophets as forewarned in the Bible:

Matthew 7:15: Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

2 Peter 2:1: But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Matthew 24:11: And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

John 4:1: Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.



- So we ministers of the gospel are to shield and protect all the sheep whenever and wherever we can as being overseers of the flock, and keepers of God's Vineyard. We must oppose and refute their crooked doctrines, and reject and cut them off from the church communion as revealed in the **2 Peter** and in **Jude**. Notice the words "while they feast with you" without fear.

2 Peter 2:13: And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

Jude 1:12: These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

- We must refute their doctrine and cut them off from the church so you will not be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine.

Ephesians 4:14: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

- Note the last part of our key text — “our vines have tender grapes”:

Song of Songs 2:15: Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the

vines: for our vines have tender grapes.

The grape is a very tender fruit, easily spoiled at best. So the grapes or fruit of the young Christian are the tenderest ever grown. Nothing is so easily soiled as a Christian's character and reputation, or so readily tainted and poisoned as his purity and piety. We must be on guard continually, and must be careful to whom we trust our soul's welfare.

- The bridegroom in our text⁵ — a type or foreshadow of The Lord Jesus Christ — is warning his bride — a type or foreshadow of the Church/Believers — about these little foxes. Old foxes eat the grapes, while the young ones spoil the vines. This causes the grapes to lose the sap and die.



So be warned, saints of God. It is not the big sins that are so dangerous, for we know about them and are aware of them. It is the little foxes — little words, habits, fleshly lusts — that will eat away at our lives until we wither up and die. Neglect of prayer and the Word of God can so weaken us until we can no longer fight and conquer these little foxes. So be strong in these areas, and may the God of peace be with you.

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⁵ The book Song of Songs depicts the love between a bridegroom (King Solomon) and his bride, and is a type/foreshadow of the love of God for His people.