

## **I Have Sinned** **by Jack Hyles**

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I have preached three and a half times a day for sixteen years. I guess I spend three hours a day on my feet talking to crowds. I am as at home, honestly, right now as you ladies would be if you were in the kitchen, or as you students would be studying in the dormitory. This is where I live. I spend more time doing what I am doing now than any other single activity. Yet there are three words that I have a hard time speaking. Every time I begin saying them, I feel like a child in the first grade saying, "Mary had a little lamb." I speak to crowds several times a day. Yesterday I spoke to a convention, and tomorrow I speak near Washington. Though I speak often, whenever I say, "I have sinned," or "I am sorry," I do not have the eloquence of Apollos. Do you know why? Satan is whispering in my ear, "Don't say that."

It is so much easier for me to say, "He has sinned," "You have sinned," or "They have sinned." Yet the Bible says that there is a special reward for the person who says, "I have sinned."

### ***I. The Men Who Said, "I Have Sinned."***

"I have sinned," said Pharaoh in Exodus 9:27 and Exodus 10:16, as he saw the hail mixed with fire running along the ground, as he saw the herbs of the field and trees killed and as he saw the locusts and the crops eaten by them.

"I have sinned," said Balaam in Numbers 22:34 when he realized that he was out of the will of God for his life.

"I have sinned," said Achan in Joshua 7:20 after taking the money and the Babylonish garment from the city of Jericho. He took of the accursed thing not to be taken by God's people. As the Israelites came near the city of Jericho, God said, "Do not take a thing!" Perhaps Achan said, "It will not matter if I take a little money and a little garment." He took the money and the garment and hid them in his tent. After the battle of *Ai* was lost, Joshua called the people together and said, "Who sinned?" The lot fell toward Achan, and he and his family were brought before the entire camp and were stoned to death.

"I have sinned," said Saul in I Samuel 15:24, 30 when Samuel rebuked him for disobedience.

"I have sinned," said Saul when David had spared his life though Saul was seeking to kill David. Saul went to sleep outside the cave. David and his servants came out of the cave, and there was Saul lying asleep. David could have pulled his sword and pierced the heart of Saul.

Someone said, "David, here is your chance! There is your enemy! There is the man dedicated to your destruction. He is asleep. Kill him!"

David said, "I cannot lift up my hand against God's anointed."

Oh my, that's a wonderful statement. I made that statement years ago: I will never lift up my hand against God's anointed. He may not be as good a preacher as I think he ought to be, but I am not going to let words come through these lips to try to tear him down. He is God's man. I do not want to hurt him. He may want to hurt me, but if he is God's man, I do not want to hurt him. He may criticize me, but I do not want to criticize him.

Let no one from this church retaliate our critics. Let others criticize us; let us not criticize them. Let others talk about us; let us not talk about them. Let others hate us; let us love them. Let others speak unkindly about us; let us speak kindly about them. Let there be no words in our vocabularies to criticize a man who believes this Book or to criticize a church that believes the Word of God.

"I have sinned," said David in II Samuel 12:13 after his awful sin with Bathsheba and Uriah.

Nathan said, "Thou art the man."

David said, "I have sinned."

"I have sinned," said David, in II Samuel 24:10, 17 and I Chronicles 21:8.

"I have sinned," said Shimei. It was Shimei who hurled dust at King David. It was Shimei who cursed King David as he came toward Mahanaim. When David came back from Mahanaim to sit once again on the throne in the palace of Jerusalem Shimei said, "I have sinned!"

"I have sinned," said Pharaoh.

"I have sinned," said Balaam.

"I have sinned," said Achan.

"I have sinned," said Saul.

"I have sinned," said David.

"I have sinned," said Shimei.

"I have sinned," said Job in Job 7:20. Pride had crept into his heart. Job was the best Christian in the world. God said to the devil, "Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in all the world?" Job was the best Christian in the world. Because

he was, he became proud. He lost his health. He lost his money. He lost his children. He lost everything that was holy and righteous to him. He was sitting in the ash heap outside the city, scraping his body with a piece of metal, wiping off the corruption that came from the sores on his body, sitting in live coals to keep himself from hurting quite so much through the awful pain that accompanies the awful disease of elephantiasis.

Suddenly Job began to think. "I lost my kids, but I did not yield. I lost my riches, but I did not yield. I lost my wealth, but I did not compromise. I lost the faithfulness of my wife, but I did not compromise. I lost my friends, but I did not yield. I am a pretty good fellow." Pride crept into his heart and he cried, "I have sinned!"

"I have sinned," said Micah in Micah 7:9. He looked at his people and saw their wickedness and realized that they were a reflection of his own life. "I have sinned," said Micah.

"I have sinned," said the prodigal son in Luke 15:18 and 21, as he returned home, having spent all. As he came to himself he said, "I will arise and go to my father." He arose and went to his father and the first three words he said were, "I have sinned!"

"I have sinned," said Judas in Matthew 27:4 as he realized that he had sold the Saviour and his own soul for thirty pieces of silver Judas looked at his little handful of money. He threw the money on the ground and hanged himself. Before he did so, he said, "I have sinned!" He had betrayed innocent blood.

"I have sinned," said Pharaoh. "I have sinned," said Balaam. "I have sinned," said Achan. "I have sinned," said Saul.

"I have sinned," said David. "I have sinned," said Shimei. "I have sinned," said Job.

"I have sinned," said the prodigal son.

"I have sinned," said Judas.

"But," you say, "Preacher, I am an alcoholic!"

If you will say, "I have sinned," God will forgive you. "But," you say, "Preacher, I have killed a man."

If any man say, "I have sinned," God says He will forgive him.

"But," you say, "Preacher, I am a wicked man of adultery, sensuality and perversion."

God will forgive you.

"But," you say, "Preacher, you don't know what I have done!"

A man walked into my office a few weeks ago and said, "Preacher, God won't forgive me."

I said, "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord:

though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18.

"But," he said, "Preacher, you don't understand. With these hands I killed a man!"

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

"You don't understand! You don't understand," he said. "These hands have reached around the neck of a little innocent girl, thirteen years of age. I forced her to lie down. I raped that little thirteen-year-old girl. God wouldn't forgive me!"

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

If any man says, "I have sinned," not "if any good man," not "if any non-murderer" not "if any non-drunkard," not "if any non-thief," but if *any* man say, "I have sinned," it does not matter what you have done; if you will say and mean, "I have sinned," God will forgive! If any man who is in deep sin, any man who has killed someone, any man who is guilty of treason, any man who is a dirty drunkard, any man who has been a Communist, any man who has been a pervert, any man who has been a homosexual, if any man will say, "I have sinned," God will forgive him. You are just as near to God as the admission of your sin. "I will deliver him from the pit," says God, "if he says, 'I have sinned.'"

## ***II. The Type of Men Who Said, "I Have Sinned."***

"David, do you mean that righteous people are supposed to say, 'I have sinned'?" Oh, yes. David, the man after God's own heart, the sweet Psalmist of Israel, the sweet harpist of Israel, the greatest king who ever sat on the throne in Jerusalem said, "I have sinned." If David, the man after God's own heart, can acquiesce and say, "I have sinned," don't you think I ought to be able to say, "I have sinned"?

Who said, "I have sinned"? Saul, who was the first Icing of Israel, said it. He was chosen by God above everyone in Israel to be the king. Saul, who was chosen by God as the greatest man in all of Israel, said, "I have sinned."

Who said, "I have sinned"? Job, the best Christian in all the world said, "I have sinned." God said to Satan, "Hast thou considered My servant Job? Have you looked at him? He is

a mature and upright man. He hates sin. He reared his children for God. He stood up for God."

Job found one day that all of his children had been killed at the same time. Yet he said, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

See him as he sits in the ash heap at the city dump. See him as he scrapes himself with the piece of potsherd removing the corruption running down his body. See him as he hears his wife say, "Why don't you just curse God and die?" See him as his friends come and say, "See what you get for your sins!" See him lose everything that is holy. See him as his riches, his cattle, his sheep, his donkeys and his oxen are taken. Yet Job said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth. Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." That is the kind of man who said, "I have sinned," in the Bible.

Who said, "I have sinned"? Micah, the one who looked down through Heaven's telescope 500 years before Christ and saw Bethlehem's manger and the birth of the Christ child. Micah said, "I have sinned."

Who said, "I have sinned," in the Bible? Balaam did. Balaam was a great preacher. Yet he said, "I have sinned."

Let me ask you a question, ladies and gentlemen: Do you think Balaam was a great Christian because he could say, "I have sinned"? Do you think that it may be that one cause for Balaam's greatness was his willingness to say, "I have sinned"? Do you think that Saul became a great man because he could say, "I have sinned"? One of the reasons Job was a mature and upright man, perhaps, was that he was willing to say, "I have sinned."

Let me say, my dear friend, you will never in the world be all that God wants you to be, you will never do all that God wants you to do until you have learned to quit talking about others and start talking about yourself. There is nothing so little, so wicked, so vile, so un-Christlike, so Satanic, so unscriptural, so hurtful and deadly as God's people criticizing each other. Away with that kind of garbage! What kind of Christianity is it that slanders others? Would God we would realize that as long as liquor runs like a river, we do not have time to criticize each other! Would God we had enough intelligence and spirituality to realize that as long as dope is in our schools, we do not have time to fight each other! As long as the dirty Communists are trying to destroy this nation, as long as the hippie crowd is trying to destroy our freedom and our capitalistic society, we do not have time to fight each other. It is time we stood shoulder to shoulder and said, "By the grace of God we are not going to tattle, talk about and criticize fellow Christians." In God's dear name, learn to say, "I have sinned," not "She has sinned!" Learn to say, "I have sinned," not "He has sinned." Learn to say, "I have sinned," not "They have sinned." Learn to say, "I have sinned," not "You have sinned."

May I fall on my face and say with Job, "I have sinned." May I say with Balaam, "I have sinned." May I say with Saul, "I have sinned." May I say with David, "I have sinned." May I say with Micah, "I have sinned." May I say with the prodigal son, "I have sinned."

I go all across the country preaching and when I do, I hear others preachers preach. I kneel at the altar like you do. I would not ask you to do anything that I would not do myself. I kneel like you do. I have wept at altars all over this country. I get so busy trying to raise money, building a Sunday school, taking care of the business of the church, building a school and taking airplane trips that my heart sometimes grows cold, not because I do not love the Lord, not because I do not believe the Bible, not because I do not pray, but just because I get so busy! Oh, time and time again I have heard a man of God preach, and I have knelt and said, "Oh, God, I have sinned." We never get too high to do that.

May I say to the administration of the grade schools, high school and college, learn to say, "I have sinned." May I say to the professors in our college, learn to say, "I have sinned." May I say to teachers in the grade schools and high school, learn to say, "I have sinned." May I say to men whose signatures can sway huge business deals, learn to say, "I have sinned." I say to the 100 deacons on our board, learn to say, "I have sinned." I say to the choir, learn to say, "I have sinned." Oh, if Job, the best Christian that ever lived; if David, the best king that ever sat on the throne; if Micah, who saw with Heaven's telescope the coming of the Christ child 500 years before He came; and if Saul, the one chosen as the first king of Israel, learned to say, "I have sinned," how much more should Jack Hyles learn to say, "I have sinned."

May I never become so proud that I cannot say, "I have sinned." I do not care how many degrees you have, how big a preacher you are, how long you have been saved, how many Bible classes you have taught, how important you are in the church, there is not a person in this room tonight, including this speaker, that ought not come to God regularly and say, "Oh, my God, I have sinned! I have sinned! I have sinned!"

### ***III. The Things That God Used to Lead These Men to Say, "I Have Sinned."***

Notice why they paused and gave recognition to their sins. Notice why they said, "I have sinned."

In the case of David, it was preaching. I like David. Nathan was asked to speak at the "President's Prayer Breakfast." Nathan pointed his finger at King David and said, "Thou art the man!"

Say what you want to say, but there is nothing that will put conviction inside the heart of man like Spirit-filled preaching. Someone has said, "Preaching is teaching with a tear in

the eye. He also said, "It is pouring to the congregation in a flood what they have sent up to you in a vapor." May it ever be said, may it ever be true, that as long as there is a First Baptist Church of Hammond, from this pulpit there goes forth preaching!

What else causes people to admit they have sinned? The dregs of sin do. The prodigal son got into the hog pen and filled his own stomach with the food the hogs would eat. He tasted the dregs of sin. Ladies and gentlemen, sin has beautiful lights at the front door, but the back door is a dark, lonely place. Sin has a pretty beginning but it also has an ugly end. The first day in sin is the nicest day you'll spend, so enjoy it. Every day in sin is worse than the day before, but every day with Jesus is better than the day before!

A man sat in my office this last week. He looked at me across the desk and said, "Sir, I am a homosexual." His lips began to quiver as he said, "I don't want to be one." I talked to him for awhile. He pleaded, "Would you help me? I don't want to 'be one. Won't you help me?"

I told him, "I will meet with you. I will talk with you. I will do all that I can.,,

He said of his homosexuality, "I didn't enjoy it much after awhile. At first it was fun. The appetite is made, but it doesn't satisfy like it used to. It gets worse all the time!"

Sinner, it does get worse all the time. Hear it, wicked man, it gets worse all the time! Hear it, dope addict, it gets worse all the time. Hear it, drunkard, it gets worse all the time.

Hear this, Christian people, it gets better all the time!

The dregs of sin are what cause people to say, "I have sinned."

Judas Iscariot held in his hands thirty pieces of silver, looked at them and said, "I have sinned." How pretty that silver looked to him until he got it. It is an amazing thing. When he saw the silver at first, he thought, "Boy, what I could do with that! I want it! I want it! I want that money!" Then he got those thirty pieces of silver in his own hands and hated it.

It is amazing, ladies and gentlemen, how much fun it appears before you get there, and how empty it is once you are there.

The righteousness of God's people also causes some to say, "I have sinned." Saul saw the righteousness of David and said, "I have sinned." Shimei saw the righteousness of David and said, "I have sinned."

The presence of God also causes folks to say, "I have sinned." When Balaam saw the presence of God he said, "I have sinned."

#### ***IV. The Sins They Committed.***

What were the sins of these men? One was the sin of hurting God's people. Saul, Pharoah and Shimei had done that. Let me just stop and say again, I don't know why any of us should want to try to hurt the rest of us.

There is a famous preaching in this country who made a careless statement about a few other churches. He did not mean to hurt us. He just spoke carelessly. I wrote him a letter and said, "My dear brother, I am not writing in defense of myself, but I am writing in defense of thousands of young preachers who look to both of us as leaders. I am begging you, for the sake of those young men in our country, let's present a solid front." That famous preacher, the big man that he is, said, "I have sinned. I did wrong. I know it. Forgive me. I'll ask others to forgive me."

I know the best preachers in America. I know the pastors of the largest churches in America. There is not a big shot among them. There is not a proud and cocky one among them. They are just a group of men who are sinners, who have learned to say, "I have done wrong. I have sinned."

You have heard me tell about the day my second daughter, Linda, was about to bleed to death at Dyer Mercy Hospital Her tonsils were taken out, and they couldn't stop the bleeding. The nurse picked up her little bloody body and ran down the hall calling, "Doctor! Doctor! Doctor!"

I went in a room alone and said, "Oh God, what is it?" I saw the face of a man to whom I wouldn't speak. I said, "I will make it right." A few months later God gave me the chance to make it right. I met that man at the altar of a church and said, "Sir, I have sinned."

What sins caused men to say, "I have sinned"? There was the sin of criticizing God's people. There was the sin of leaving the will of God. What other sins did they commit? Saul committed the sin of disobedience. Job committed the sin of pride. David committed the sin of a sensual life and murder. The prodigal son committed the sin of a wasted life. Achan stole from God. They all said, "I have sinned."

"I have sinned because I have robbed God." "I have sinned because I have not tithed." "I have sinned because I have taken something that was accursed." "I have sinned because I wanted something for myself." "I have sinned because I have not given God what is His." "I have sinned because I have not kept a pledge." "I have sinned because I lived a sensual life." "I have sinned because I left the will of God." "I have sinned because I was stiff-necked and rebellious." "I have sinned because I have criticized the people of God." "I have sinned because I was proud." These are the sins of many of God's people.

I was in East Chicago, Indiana, several years ago. I knocked on a door. A lady came to the door. I said, "I'm Pastor Hyles."

She said, "Yes, I know who you are." Then she said these exact words (I'll never forget it): "I was in your church last Sunday. I have just got to say three things to you."

I said "What are they?"

She said, "Your pianist played too fast, and your singer sang too fast, and you preached too fast, and I couldn't get out of that place fast enough. And besides, if all I've heard about you is true, you're not much anyhow!"

"Lady, they are all true."

"What?"

"They are all true. I am not much. Really, I mean it. I am just a sinner. Lady, I hope you will pray for me. I want to be better. I hate me worse than you do. If you will just let me come in, I will tell you some of my sins. I want you to pray with me that I will do better."

She opened the door all the way, and tears began to roll down her cheeks. She said, "I didn't mean to hurt your feelings." In fifteen minutes, she was a child of God. Then she came to our church the next Sunday and was baptized.

Do you know why? It was because the preacher said, "I have sinned."

"I have sinned," said Job.

"I have sinned," said Balaam.

"I have sinned," said Saul.

"I have sinned," said David.

"I have sinned," said the prodigal son.

"I have sinned!" you say.

What can you do? Confess it! I John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

When Becky was a little tyke, she got in the chocolate brownies before they were cooked. She got a handful of that stuff and tried to get it into her mouth. A little of it got in! There were fingerprints and chocolate all over her face. She got another handful. It dripped down her neck, her dress, and her legs.

I walked in. "Becky, have you been in the cookies?"

"No, sir."

*[I Have Sinned](#)* by Jack Hyles

That is the way most of us are, isn't it? Pride shows all over our faces and we won't bring ourselves to say, "I have sinned."

You have not prayed five minutes today. Have you sinned? You have not read a chapter in the Bible today. Have you sinned? The first step toward forgiveness is confession. Admit it. Face up to it. Confess it.

After you have confessed your sin, ask for forgiveness and forsake it.

Wednesday night, thirteen years ago, I looked in your faces for the first time as your pastor. Do you know what I have tried to do from this pulpit? I have tried to get you to be the kind of people who are willing to fall at the old-fashioned altar and say, "I have sinned."