

Reeks: Ons Vra(e)...
Titel: ...about Quantum Sin
Prediker: Ron Martoia
Datum: 24 Julie 2011


mosaïek

daniellestraat, fairland 2030
posbus 1658, fairland 2030
t: 011 268 4700
f: 011 268 4800
info@mosaïek.com
www.mosaïek.com

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in the body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. For you've spent enough time in the past doing the things that Pagans choose to do: living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing, and detestable adultery. They think it's strange that you do not plunge into the very same flood of dissipation and they heap abuse on you, but they will have to give account to Him who's ready to judge the living and the dead. For this reason, the gospel's preached even to those who are now dead so that they might be judged according to men in regard to the body, but live according to God in regard to the spirit. The end of all things is near, therefore be clear-minded – be self-controlled – so that you can pray, and then above all... above all, love each other deeply. Love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Well, we are in a series... if you are joining us midstream, we're in a series called We Ask..., and I just want to – as an entrance into my material – I just want to point out a... maybe a little known fact that I think I need to make obvious. Trevor and Jan Beukes, we ask about the Church – broad, easy topic. Stefan Joubert, friend of mine, he does... we ask about heaven in hell – nice topic; controversial, delicate, challenging man – lots to say about heaven and hell. It's in the media – big book's been written; front cover of Time magazine. A guy we know who wrote a recent book on heaven and hell, you see Johann Geyser, our very own, right. I wrote a book; my latest book was on the bible. What did Johann do? We asked about the bible. Johann, come on. No, what we're going to do is we're going ask the guest American to speak on that ever-exciting topic – that topic that is sure to get a return invitation. Ron, we'd really like you to talk about sin. Are you...? I shot an email back, I said are you really serious or are you kidding me? No, they were serious, so I get to talk to you about sin.

Well you just read a passage where it starts out talking about Jesus wrestling in his body so there would be no sin in his life, and then the passage ending saying... And whatever you do, love deeply because it covers a multitude of sins, and one of the things that we know is that the bible is in constant dialogue with its culture. The language that it uses, it uses in the language of the culture so when you come against that word sin in the text we just read in first Peter... And many of you if you've been around the Church at all you've heard this – that that word sin literally means to miss the mark; how many of you have heard that before? Sin means to miss the mark – this is old news, right?

It actually is a word that comes out of the community of archery, all right? The bow and arrow; the archer pulls the arrow back, lets it fly, and if it misses the bulls-eye he missed the mark – he sinned, okay? That's where the word comes from; it is a metaphor that is deeply engaged in the culture of the biblical world. We've got other biblical metaphors, and all these are just descriptions of what does it mean to do this thing we call sin? You missed the bulls-eye, which of course... I mean, who made the bulls-eye? What is the bulls-eye? Is the bulls-eye hittable? I mean, there's all sorts of questions, right?

But the bible uses other metaphors about sin and around sin; the wages of sin – Romans sixth [unclear] right? I mean, what sort of dividends, what sort of wages does sin pay? It's another metaphor. Isaiah says, you know, sin is like a red stain on white wool fabric and it can be washed white as snow. Isaiah... so there are these metaphors that grows up around the biblical ideas that we have, largely because these are metaphors that those readers and those writers would have understood – does that make sense? I mean, you and I don't carry around a bow and arrow today; if we were going to start writing about sin and create the category, we wouldn't say hey, you know what? The best thing I can think of is bow and arrow; most of us would go, no.

Page 1 of 6



So what I want to do today, is I want to help us think about another metaphor – I think an incredibly powerful metaphor – to help us think through the implications of sin and how sin works. But before that I want to say sin is something that is so powerful in its individual life context as well as in its corporate, sort of, collective global context, that when sin is in play everything can change in an instant.

Video: It has been said that there is great power in a moment; that in an instant, everything can change. Perhaps it is true that in just one instant everything can break apart.

[Music]

In an instant, everything changed in Oslo this week, but you and I somehow felt it. There is something about the way the world appears to be and how we actually experience it that seemed out of sync. You seem like an individual – distant and separate from me. This podium seems to be hard, solid, fixed, immovable – but both of those are illusions. We know that if we take a powerful microscope and we start to scope in on this, what we find out is there is actually more space between atoms and electrons spinning around than there is solidity, right? Isn't this what we learned in grade school biology and high school physics? And believe me, this isn't going to be a science lesson – I'm not that smart, all right, so...

But we have this illusion that we're separate, that we're individuals, that what we do doesn't impact anybody else, but what we've come to learn – and Oslo's a great example of that – is that somehow when things happen that have that thing involved called sin, we feel it even if we're not directly attached to it – true or false? We feel it. About 100 years ago – 1910, 1911 – this equation was written to describe a reality that actually impacts you a whole lot more than you understand and I understand. Most of us have never even seen this equation – we don't even know what it is – but when I tell you you've probably heard of it... This is an equation written down by one of Einstein's colleagues named Max Planck; this is the Planck constant.

And this equation describes that actually reality isn't about distant, distinct, separate pieces that only interact if they're close enough to touch each other. Planck's constant actually says that everything is deeply connected in this invisible field, this invisible fabric that everything is held together by. And so for the last hundred years lots and lots of research is being done on things like the ZPF – the Zero Point Field. Just hang with me for a little bit; just a couple of illustrations to get you where we're going.

What's the Zero Point Field? The Zero Point Field is this reality that you and I live in. We might even say – we might gently whisper – Kingdom of God. There's this hidden reality, this invisible reality, out of which everything has emerged, out of which everything ends up dissolving, and that reality scientists tell us, when we drop everything down to the coldest possible temperatures imaginable and vacuum everything out, we still have this energetic field that is still the reality and the fabric of our existence. And we can't get out of it; we can't vacuum it out, we can't cut it away, we can't make it disappear. It is the fundamental baseline, hence the name Zero Point Field.

So, can I give you a little biblical illustration? Jesus was walking around apparently minding his own business; he's going through a crowd and some woman desperately beats her way through the crowd, just touches a little bit of the fabric of his tunic and he goes, woah, I just felt energy leave me. Now that's an odd way to phrase that; we might say who bumped into me, who's pulling on my shirt, but I just felt power leave me? You and I experience this, don't we?

Somebody comes into the office and they had a tough morning. Oh, so some of you had that nice pre-Sunday Church fight on the way in, you know, that's like the ideal time to have a family blowout, right? And there are people already that I've greeted, I said hey, how're you doing? You're going, oh, I'm fine.



Not really, but I'm fine – right? They feel that though, right? We feel something that's invisible between us – right or wrong? We feel something.



You know what, one of the other things that came out of Planck's constant – an exploration of what does it mean that our world at the quantum level is entangled, at the atomic level is entangled; Bell's theorem of non-local causality. Fancy word for experiments that they did that they said: if we can have a couple of atomic particles – two pairs of electrons – and we keep one here in Johannesburg and we send another one to Switzerland, what we know from what Einstein had taught us, is if we impact this electron and anything happens to that electron, it would only happen at the speed of light; nothing can go faster than the speed of light.

daniellestraat, fairland 2030
postbus 1658, fairland 2030
t: 011 268 4700
f: 011 268 4800
info@mosaïek.com
www.mosaïek.com

But do you know what we found out? Not true; Planck's constant proves, and shows, that when we've gone ahead and we changed the spin on this electron here in Johannesburg, the spin in Switzerland of that paired electron instantaneously changes. Instantaneously – not speed of light – instantaneously. There's some invisible wire; there's some invisible fabric, there's some invisible quantum soup that all this is deeply connected to so even a little dinky electron impacts that electron way over there – instantaneously.

They're doing experiments right now; these are well documented. You can find them all over the internet – many of them are being done at Arizona State University in the United States – on how thoughts have energy and how our thoughts impact reality. Not like ooh, weird stuff. No, they're measuring this, right? You know, Einstein – when he heard Planck begin talking about this – you know what Einstein said? Einstein said, I don't believe any of this because you're talking to me about spooky actions at a distance; that's what he called this stuff – spooky actions at a distance – and Planck said no, this is real, and so now they're doing experiments about how our thoughts impact the fabric of our world.

And so what I would like to do is I would like to offer another metaphor for us. I mean, we have the archery metaphor, we have the white wool stained with red that can be washed white again; we have these metaphors, but I want to offer to you a slightly different metaphor that I think is in conversation with the culture we live in, because that's what the bible is doing – having a conversation. And I think a possible way of getting at sin might be something like this: sins are those attitudes, and actions, and behaviours that either individually or collectively demonstrate or show anti-life. And because they're anti-life they tear at and tatter the quantum fabric of human existence and they separate that and disconnect us from God, each other, and even ourselves.

I mean, I want you to think about this; you and I think about human existence and we go, you know, this is me – and we say things like this all the time, don't we – and this is you, and what I do and what you do... do your thing, I do my thing, don't mess with me, all right? Hey, what I do is my business, right? But the problem is, when I do sin things I tear at the fabric of human existence and I end up leaving tatters and tears that not only affect you, it affects the space between. But it affects everybody that's connected to that fabric and would happen to be you, and me, and your neighbour, and people you don't know.

That's why when things happen in Oslo we go, oh! I mean, how many of you when you heard that and saw it, felt it? Felt it, yes, we feel it. It's not just a cognitive, oh that's too bad – next – we, kind of, go what? And we, kind of, go gosh – we feel something. Planck would say... quantum physicists would say, of course you feel something. The fabric of human existence has been disrupted, and if you think that what you do, and what you do, are not connected, you're simply wrong because every time we engage in sin we tear at fabric that affects the whole fabric.

Thoughts, attitudes and actions that are anti-life tear at the fabric and I think this is one of the reasons why I want to suggest this morning that sin is fundamentally a relational category. It's a relational category. Apart from relationship, there's no such thing as sin. If there isn't a God that you're in a



relationship, there's no sin, right? Not against God. and if you don't know anybody and you're on a desert island, there's nobody around – there's no sin there either because there's nobody to sin against. So no God, no people, no sin – it doesn't exist – it's relational.

The dynamic is fundamentally fabric, it's fundamentally field, and when we do anti-life sorts of things, we tear and we ripple the field. And it impacts you, and it impacts me, and it impacts your neighbour and the person behind you and the person you work with. They feel it; they know it. I mean, how many of you have ever been in a meeting, and you walked out of the meeting and go man, meeting energy today was terrible. What are you talking about? What are you talking about? Aren't you talking about some mumbo jumbo new age nonsense? Oh, energy in the room was, kind of, low – really? We've all thought that though, or you know what? The energy was amazing – wow! Right?

What's this? What's this? See, I like the image of archery; it's fine with me – missed the mark. But you know that metaphor could only go so far; they only had so much available to them in the first century when they're using this term in the New Testament. They only had so much available to them; Isaiah could say, you know, what could I... what could I compare sin to? What is sin? Sin's like a, you know, a piece of white wool that gets stained, you know, that's... but you know what?

They're telling us we've got quantum fabric between us; we've got this quantum field between us and, man, it impacts everything. It's a deeply relational category, and back to the intention experiment – they're doing thought experiments. Do you know, you know, one of the interesting things as I was reflecting on this... you remember Jesus? He comes on the scene and this is in his first big sermon – Sermon on the Mount – it's in a section that we call the great antithesis.

The great antithesis; Jesus comes out and he says: you have heard it said, but I say to you... yes, antithesis, and he came out and he said: you have heard it said you shouldn't do X – don't murder, don't commit adultery, don't, you know, don't whatever. And he mentions an action; he says: you've heard it said don't do that, but I want to tell you something – don't even think it. Is that what he said?

Listen, don't commit murder, but let me tell you, if you even harbour anger it's exactly the same. Now, you and I would, kind of, go now come on Jesus – really? I mean, don't get all worked out about my own thoughts – I've got thoughts, you've got thoughts, let's keep... I mean, thoughts are mine and yours. No, Jesus said, no, thoughts matter. Thoughts matter. It impacts this... it impacts this... We're deeply connected, but the problem is – and this is why sin being called anti-life I think is so helpful – sin gives you and I the illusion that we are separate, and we are not. It gives you and I the sense that whatever I do is me and whatever you do is you, and never will the two ever intersect or meet.

But the truth of the matter is that's simply false. That's a nice Newtonian – Sir Isaac Newton – world where we all think that all the atoms are separate and they never connect and this podium is really firm and hard. But you know what, that's not really how it is, because what you see is not the whole story. What you see is not the whole story – there's a lot more to it.

And so we are faced – when it comes to the issues of sin, I mean – we said in our passage, we re-read it, listed out carousing and idolatry and getting your own way. And, I mean, there's all these things that you and I say yes, I get, you know, the nasty nine and the dirty dozen – I get it, you know, the biggies. But Jesus said hey, there's subtle thoughts here; these subtle thoughts, they can really rupture the whole deal. It can tear at the whole fabric; it can impact everything, and those thoughts and those attitudes and those behaviours that tear at the fabric, that disrupt the quantum field – it impacts everybody.

Here's what we know, right? We know this – I'm from the United States. United States has never been the same since 9/11, right? But you know what the truth of the matter is? The world has not been the same. Oslo will never be the same since what's happened in this bombing, but do you know what? The



world will never be the same, right? There's something fundamental about our deep connections with each other that we often just pass by.



In sin, particularly as we think about it from the world of quantum mechanics, does not allow us to escape into the pretty notion you're separate and I'm separate, because we're not. Think it if you want, but we are not. There are enormous implications for how we think and for what we do. So I really want to invite you to think with me as we came to the end of our passage and it says: love covers a multitude of sins. Love each other deeply.

daniellestraat, fairland 2030
postbus 1658, fairland 2030
t: 011 268 4700
f: 011 268 4800
info@mosaïek.com
www.mosaïek.com

And you know what I think happens? I think love mends the tears in the quantum field. Love somehow relaxes the ripples in the fabric so that it gets all smoothed out; it's the great iron, you know. Love smoothes out the wrinkles in the field; it allows you and I the opportunity to say: what is the antidote to this? What is the fix for this? What do we do with this? Do you see that... I mean, missing the mark – yes, that's bad – but do you know what? I mean, this makes sin dynamic, man.

When you blow it, when you do anti-life, when I do anti-life I impact you even if you don't know me. I think this is one of the very reasons why... I mean, this is Paul, right? I think this is one of the very reasons why Paul wanted to use a metaphor for the Church that would not allow you and I to think that the skin boundary was a decisive boundary. and so he said we all are the body of Christ; we're all within the same skin. I think he did it for a very definite reason, and he tipped his hand as to why he did it. He said because here's the thing – when one part of the body hurts, the other part hurts, right? He was trying to say there's a deep interconnectedness that you cannot escape.

So anti-life, missing the mark, staining the wool, rippling the quantum field all have implications for our... how it is that we do life with each other and how it is that we offer to humanity something else other than this. It's why right after he said love deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins. He goes on and he says... verse nine, we stopped at verse eight it says: be quick to give a meal to the hungry and a bed to the homeless, cheerfully. This is right after love each other deeply. Here's a possibility of loving each other, I mean, we can't go and fix Oslo, right? So what are going to do?

Well, we're going to work on our own little... our own little piece of fabric, our own little quantum world, our own little connectedness. Be generous with different things God gave you, passing them around so all get in on it. I mean, what Peter goes on to do is just say hey, listen, this love deeply thing – it's just real practical stuff – it's stuff that creates deeper connections. They're already there, but these deepen them, I mean, who doesn't love to be in a relationship with somebody who, you know what, they just really love you as is, no strings attached, no performance necessary.

Where do you find that? You're supposed to find it in the Church; most of the time we don't, but we're supposed to do that, right? Love mends the tears, relaxes and smoothes the wrinkles and the ripples. And so this morning what I'd like to do is I'd like to frame a question for you. Would you rather tear at the quantum fabric of human reality with anti-life thoughts, actions and behaviours or would you rather repair it and smooth it and stitch it back together?

So this is the lingering question I want us to just sit with for a few minutes. What is it that you actually want to leave in your path? So what do you want to leave in your wake? What do you want to leave in your path? The resurrection – the greatest act of love in human history – is what enables us to love, to undo, to re-stitch, to iron out, to cover over. And it seems to me that the challenge that we have as the Church is that we would just really do the love thing a whole lot better. That's the only way around the sin thing. It's the only way around it. God so loved the world, right? That he gave.

So Father, this morning I just... gosh, I acknowledge I'm not a good lover of people so often, and I tear at the fabric badly and I create ripples where there didn't need to be ripples. And I do things that not only hurt you, but I do anti-life things that hurt my family and my friends and that hurt the world – people I



don't even know. And I don't want to leave that in my train God, I don't. I don't want to leave it in my wake; I don't want to leave it in my past; I don't want to leave it in my path.

So Father, I just pray that somehow you would help us – as your Church, as your people, as the people who are supposed to be the light and the life on this planet – that we would do a better job of being the incarnation of Jesus he's invited us to be. That we would be a better temple of your spirit; not because you are inadequate, but because we are your voice and we are your hands, and we are your love in real, tangible ways, to undo and cover over and stitch up and iron out the wrinkles in this quantum fabric that deeply connects us. And so Father, please have your way in our hearts and in our lives this morning. We surrender again to you this morning, in Jesus' name. Amen.

If you want to visit with anybody for prayer, you can go over to the stone chapel and there'll be people there for you. I'm going to invite you to stand, and we'll do a benediction and then we'll dismiss, all right? Would you stand with me? May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit that knits us all together even at the most fundamental levels of reality, be your love and your guidance this day. Amen. Go in peace.



daniellestraat, fairland 2030
postbus 1658, fairland 2030
t: 011 268 4700
f: 011 268 4800
info@mosaïek.com
www.mosaïek.com

