



In a recent entry of [\*the Conversations\*](#), Rev. Dr. Richard Juritsch explained that one of the reasons the Bible sometimes feel harsh is because it honestly records acts of violence done by people. This led to another question one of you asked. . . about 'sin'. The Director of Communications (Dr. T) has invited back Rev. Oboya Ochalla to explore this topic.

**Dr. T:** Why do Lutherans mean by 'sin'?

**Rev. Ochalla:** Sin is a word that people use differently. It's root, in both the Hebrew & Greek languages, comes from archery. Sin, basically, means 'missing the mark' or the 'target'.

When we dig more deeply into what 'sin' looks like, we discover that the teaching from the Bible is much bigger than what many people expect. Most people, looking at the question of 'sin', usually consider only questions of things that they have done or not done. Did I steal something? Yes, or no? Did I commit adultery? Did I lie? Things like this. And while these are real questions of sin – in our actions – have we broken God's Law? The Bible as a whole – and Jesus, together with the Apostles – likewise point out that sin runs much deeper. So, on the one hand, we can indeed talk about sins in the following ways:

- Sins of commission: things that we have actively done that break God's Laws and Commandment
- Sins of omission: ways we sin by not doing what the Lord Commands (not helping someone in need)

Jesus reminds us, however, that our sins are not only things rooted in our actions. He reminds us that even our thoughts and desires are expressions of sins. In Matthew 15:10-20, He points out that it is not

what goes into our body (the food we eat) that makes us unclean (sinful) but rather the things that come out of our hearts (the core of who we are) – and here he lists evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, and the like. James, in his letter, similarly discusses this where he reminds his readers that our ‘actual sins’ – the sins of commission – that we so easily fall into begin on the inside with our thoughts & desires – so that when we, as Lutheran Christians, confess our sins, we confess not only sins of commission & omission, but that we sin also in thought word and deed – recognizing that the Lord sees our hearts and our broken condition. We cannot hide from Him.

One point that is often left behind . . .

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We will have to pick up *the Conversation* to uncover what is that one point that is often left behind. Be sure to join our next *Conversation*, as we journey back to the basics . . .