

I'm highly allergic to poison ivy. If I'm anywhere near the plant, I will usually get a rash without seeing or touching it. In my twenties, I had helped my wife and father-in-law clean up a wooded lot in Little Falls. As we cleared the limbs and brush, I noticed poison ivy and pointed it out to the others. Although I was the only one that recognized it, I was also the only one to get the rash. On this occasion, I was reckless. Some of the oils had touched my clothing, which made my skin extra sensitive.

Sin is like poison ivy. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). All of us have been touched by the poison ivy of sin. We don't have to see it or touch it; it has permeated the world. Whereas poison ivy creates a sensitivity to the oils, sin can create an insensitivity to effects of sin. With sin everywhere, our souls can easily become indifferent and complacent to the impact of sin.

In the days of Zephaniah, Judah was full of corruption. Judges were unjust, prophets were false messengers, and priests were living and perpetuating unholy lives before God. It was so blatant that people were insensitive to the effect of sin in their own lives. The Lord was in their midst, and they didn't care what they were doing or how sinful they were. Zephaniah 3:5 declares, "The Lord...does no wrong. Morning by morning He dispenses His justice, and every new day He does not fail."

In the season of Lent, we are encouraged to allow God's Spirit to reveal sin in our lives. As the Lord brings conviction, we confess it to clear the sin debris in our souls. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way" (Psalm 139:23-24).

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