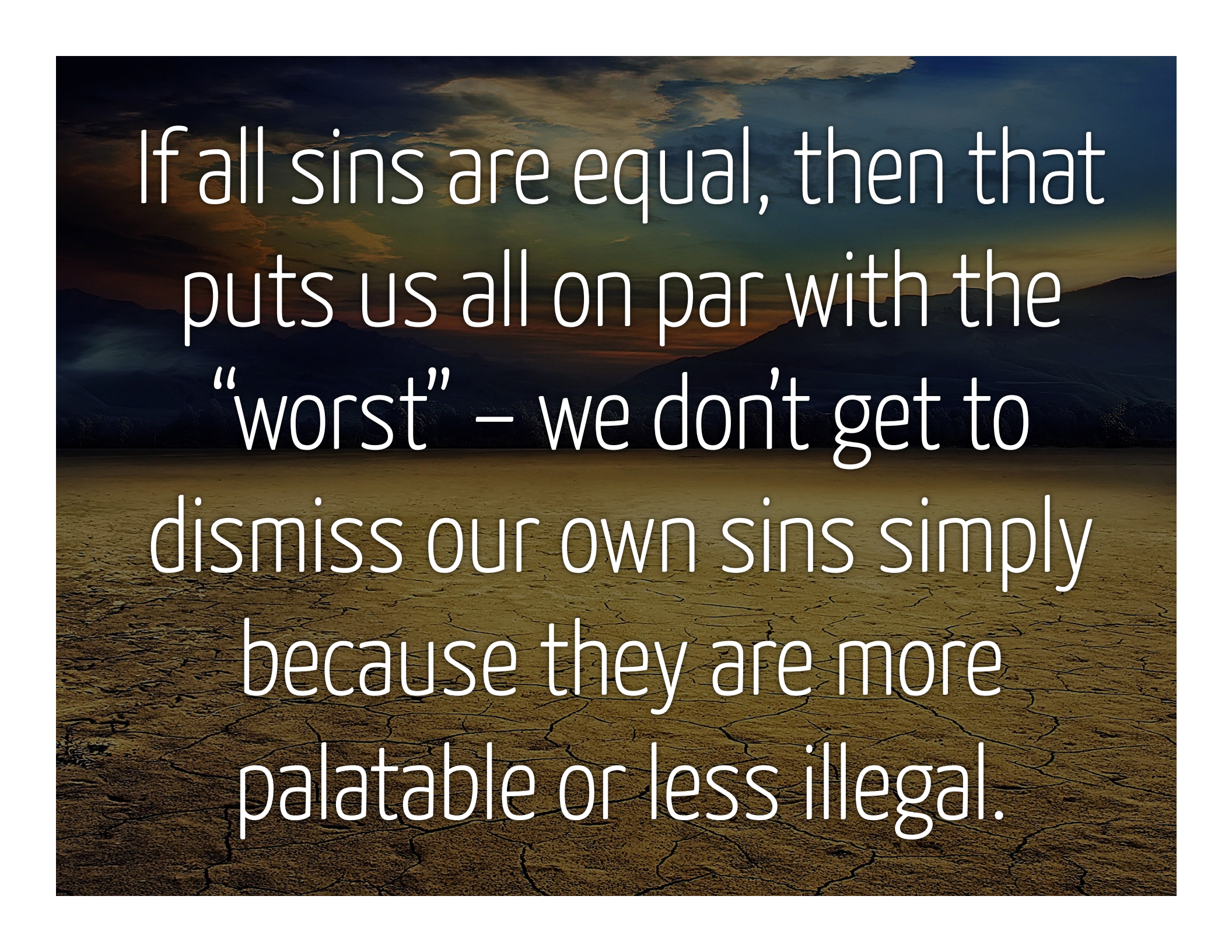




Sin Is Sin

The “Hitler Wing”

- Have you ever thought that there must be a special place in hell for the *really* bad people? As if judgment will be based on some kind of “badness curve”?
- It might be easy to look at examples such as Herod, Ahab, or Judas (or more contemporary examples like dictators or serial killers) and assume that you and I could never end up in the same place as them. However, “At least I’m not...” sounds an awful lot like the Pharisee of Luke 18:11.
- This is not an easy subject to tackle, by the way...



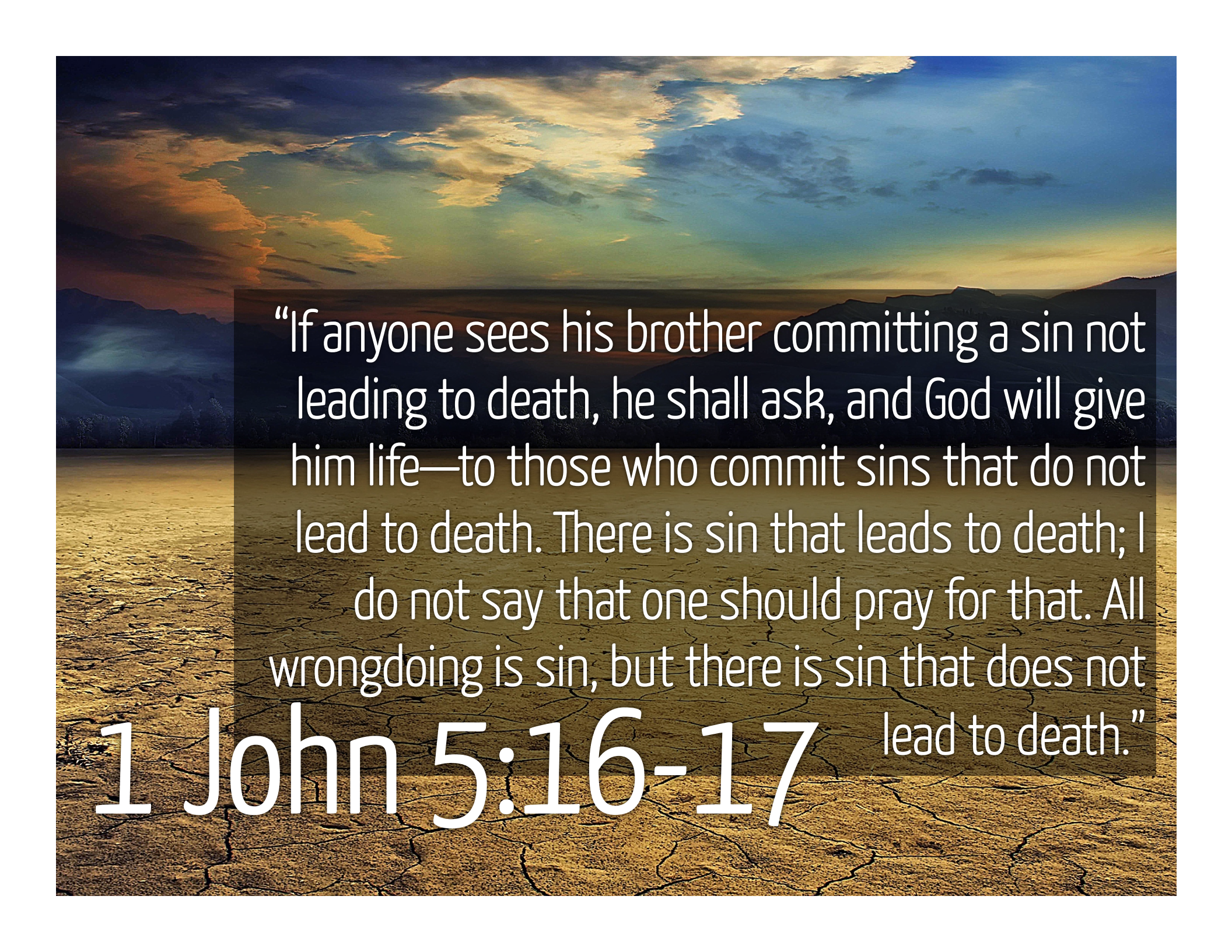
If all sins are equal, then that puts us all on par with the “worst” – we don’t get to dismiss our own sins simply because they are more palatable or less illegal.

Conflicting Ideas?

- On the one hand, there are clear passages that indicate all sins are, in a sense, equally “sinful” in the eyes of God (James 2:10, 1 John 5:17, Romans 6:23). There are also the “list” passages that seem to put all sins on the same level (Rev. 21:8, Rom. 1:28ff, Gal. 5:19-21, 1 Cor. 6:9-10).
- On the other hand, John 19:11, Matthew 12:31-32, and Matthew 7:3 (and others) all make it clear that some sins are viewed or treated differently by God.
- Are these ideas at odds with each other?

Consequences

If we fail to distinguish between earthly and eternal consequences then we might find the supposed conflict hard to resolve. To be sure, some sins are much more severe, costly, or alarming in an earthly sense than others. Even though Jesus connected the two (Matthew 5:21-22), anger and murder are **NOT ACTUALLY** the same thing.



“If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.”


1 John 5:16-17

A landscape photograph featuring a vast, cracked, and dry earth in the foreground, suggesting a drought or arid environment. In the background, there are dark, silhouetted mountains under a dramatic sky with a mix of blue, orange, and yellow hues, indicating a sunset or sunrise. The text "So, why is this so important?" is overlaid in a white, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

So, why is this so
important?

Sin Is Sin

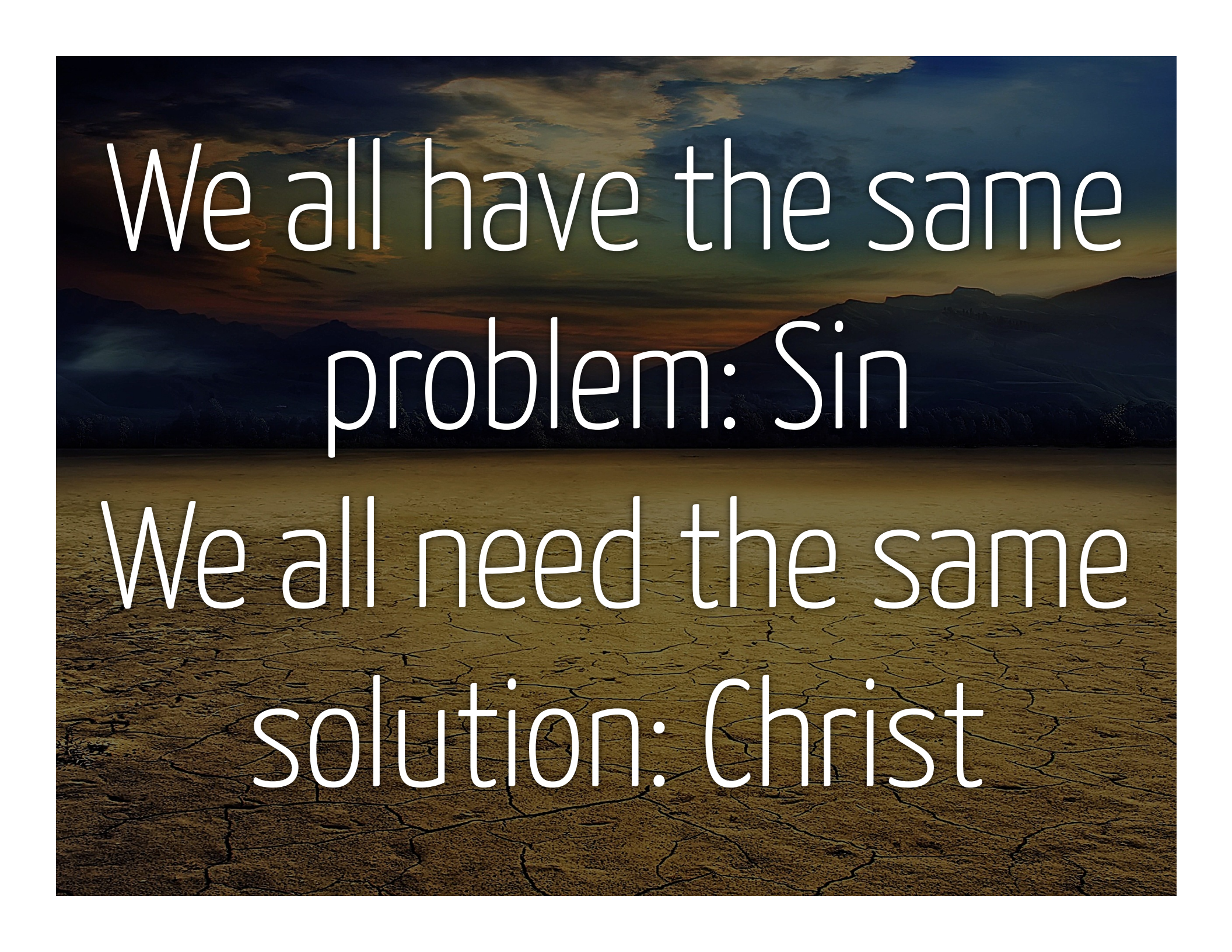
- We need to stop seeing some sins as “better” or “worse” than others. Yes, some come with a heftier *earthly* penalty (murder vs. anger), but all sins represent rebellion against God (1 John 3:4) and all cause a separation (Isaiah 59:2) that can result in condemnation (Rev. 21:8).
- Oddly enough, the “little” sins can be more difficult to root out than what we deem to be “big” sins. Hypocrisy (Matthew 23, 24:51), lack of charity (Matthew 25:41ff), lying (John 8:44), prejudice (James 2:1ff), selfish ambition (James 3:14-16) – rarely penalized, barely noticed, usually dismissed.



A couple things happen when we stop stigmatizing certain sins while ignoring others:

- First, those who struggle with sins like pornography, homosexuality, etc. will feel more compelled to be honest and seek help.
- And, second, we take *our* sins more seriously. For example, I might not be an adulterer, but that does not dismiss my lust (Matt. 5:27-28).

Start Taking Sin Seriously

The background of the image is a landscape. The top half shows a sunset or sunrise sky with dark, dramatic clouds. Below the sky are dark, silhouetted mountains. The bottom half of the image shows a wide, flat expanse of cracked, dry earth in shades of brown and tan. The text is overlaid on this background in a white, sans-serif font.

We all have the same
problem: Sin

We all need the same
solution: Christ