



# Speaking of Sin: The Lost Language of Salvation

*Barbara Taylor*

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## **Speaking of Sin: The Lost Language of Salvation** Barbara Taylor

In *Speaking of Sin*, Barbara Brown Taylor brings her fresh perspective to a cluster of words that often cause us discomfort and have widely fallen into neglect: sin, damnation, repentance, penance, and salvation. She asks, “Why, then, should we speak of sin anymore? The only reason I can think of is because we believe that God means to redeem the world through us.

“Abandoning the language of sin will not make sin go away. Human beings will continue to experience alienation, deformation, damnation and death no matter what we call them. Abandoning the language will simply leave us speechless before them, and increase our denial of their presence in our lives. Ironically, it will also weaken the language of grace, since the full impact of forgiveness cannot be felt apart from the full impact of what has been forgiven.”

Contrary to the prevailing view, Taylor calls sin “a helpful, hopeful word.” Naming our sins, she contends, enables us to move from “guilt to grace.” In recovering this “lost language of salvation” in our worship and in the fabric of our individual lives, we have an opportunity to “take part in the divine work of redemption.”

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