

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 5:16&17**

Chapter 29- The Sin Unto Death

274 The Sin Unto Death- Part 14

WAOY Tuesday 11/04/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today we're going to continue to look at what John taught about "The Sin that is unto Death". So let's open our Bibles and read **1John 5:16&17** again together:

16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading* to death, he shall ask and *God* will for him give life to those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is a sin *leading* to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.

17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not *leading* to death.

Now on the last broadcast- we were looking at what Law and Grace are so that we may rightly understand what John is talking about here when he mentions the sin unto death.

As you recall- some people teach that there are two classifications of sins- venial and mortal and that mortal sins are the sin unto death that John was talking about here in this passage. I pray that I can show you how that is not true for a number of reasons.

Those who teach about mortal sins say that mortal sins are those sins which are so bad that they actually "kill" the *process* of Salvation that began at infant baptism and extends over the life of an individual including a couple of hundred thousand years in Purgatory.

It is from this false and unbiblical teaching of mortal sins where other false teachings come forth such as The Rite of Penance and the notion that Salvation can be lost.

And I was showing you last time how that Justification is not a process at all. Biblical Justification is not something that *gradually* happens to a person over a long period of time. True genuine

Justification is an event- that happens instantly- one time- at a particular moment in time to lost sinners.

Justification is when lost sinners are forgiven and made righteous before God- and that event involves two things that instantly happen as the result of one thing that God Sovereignly does in us first.

Now we must remember that there are two parts to being Justified- not one. Everybody understands that we are forgiven when we are justified- but there is a *second* thing that occurs when we are justified in addition to being forgiven that is mostly left out when justification is being discussed.

And I was showing you that before we are saved- we have two problems- not just one. We are sinners- that's problem #1 and in addition to being sinful- we are also unrighteous as a result of being sinful. So, when we are justified- two things happen:

1. We are forgiven
2. We are made righteous

And on the last broadcast we looked at how it was the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus Christ that allowed for that holy Blood to wash our sins away and to forgive us from every sin.

But now comes the \$64,000 question. Now that we are forgiven- just how do we become righteous enough to enter into Heaven. And how you answer this question determines where you will spend eternity.

Throughout the centuries- many have attempted to solve the greatest question known to Man- God is holy and I am not. So since God is holy and I am not- how can I pass through His Judgment of my life?

And there are only two possible answers to that question:

1. I have to do something to develop my own personal righteousness to the point where it is good enough to allow me entrance into Heaven
2. The sinless spotless Righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to me by the agency of faith alone

There are on the earth approximately 9,000 different religions and human philosophies that attempt to answer this question. But in reality- there are only two religions on earth.

One religion- Biblical Christianity teaches that a man is made or declared to be righteous by God imputing or crediting the Righteousness of Jesus Christ to that person by faith alone while all the other religions and human philosophies teach the very same thing- that Man has to do something in order to develop his own personal righteousness to the degree that it is good enough to go to Heaven.

The only area where all these false religions differ is in the details of how human righteous is developed. But while they differ in the details- they all teach nonetheless that it is human righteousness – the personal intrinsic righteousness of the individual- that must be developed in order to go to Heaven.

In the case of the false religion of Islam- that personal righteousness can be developed by willingly giving your life in an official jihad; while in other false religions less violent- human righteousness is said to be developed by being baptized or by speaking in tongues or by keeping communion or by attending the mass or by praying certain prayers or by trusting in your own heart or by placing your confidence in your own ability to keep God's Law.

But the Bible is clear- all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God and developing human righteousness is not difficult- no, the Bible say that it is impossible. Yet the concept of eternal life is so great in the psyche of Man that literal millions of people right this moment are “doing something” to try to make their own inherently corrupt righteousness to be good enough to satisfy God's demands.

And this is why I have spent so much time over these last several broadcasts to talk to you about Grace. Because if people correctly understood Grace- they would not be trying so hard to earn Heaven.

It is the fact that we try so hard to improve our own condition before God that testifies to how fallen we really are. In our depraved condition we really believe that we can accomplish what Lucifer said in **Isaiah 14:14:**

Isaiah 14:14

I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most

High.'

For any sinful person to actually think that he can make himself acceptable to God by what he does is the height of arrogance and foolishness. And it is the ultimate insult to Grace and Mercy and the Cross.

When we see Salvation freely offered by Grace through Faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ and then go about trying to earn that Salvation by keeping Church Sacraments or obeying the Law of God- we are saying to God- *"No thanks- I can do this on my own!"*

Over and over in the parables- Jesus told us that it wasn't the beggar or the leper or the tax collector that missed his day of visitation- no, it was the good man- the man who thanked God that he wasn't as bad as the others- it was the nice people- the men who took great pride in how much they gave and in how much they did and in how much they said and in how great they had become- it was *those* people who went away without Salvation.

In fact the very definition of self-righteousness is when a person becomes righteous by himself- saved and washed and improved and delivered and redeemed by what he does for himself in his own strength without Grace and without Mercy and without admitting that he is a wretched sinner.

Just as I am convinced, dear friends, that the greatest hindrance that we face in this country to becoming the holy people that we should be is not in our lack but it is in our great riches and our great possessions- so too- I am also convinced that the greatest hindrance to people being saved is not in how bad they are but rather in the blindness created by how good they are.

Trusting in human goodness for Salvation is more wicked than adultery; it is more abominable than perverted men molesting little boys and it is more hideous than a woman killing her unborn child. Thinking for one second that you are acceptable in God's sight by some good deed that you did is celestial high treason- because it robs the Cross of its very existence and makes a mockery of the suffering of the Lamb of God.

Jesus suffered and died on that tree, dear friends because human goodness is not good enough. Jesus cried out, *"My God, my God Why*

hast thou forsaken me!” precisely because human beings trying to get into Heaven based on what we do will not work.

We do not *become* righteous by what we do beloved- no, we are *made* to be righteous by what Christ did for us that we could not do. It was the death of Jesus on the Cross that spilled the most holy Blood that the world has ever seen. And it was that one act that washed my sins away and brought forgiveness to me.

But remember- I have two problems- not just one. I need to be forgiven to be sure. But I also need to become righteous. And while it absolutely was the death of Jesus on the Cross that forgave me- it was not the Cross and it was not the death of Jesus that made me righteous. No, what made me righteous was the *life* of Jesus.

You see, the reason that Jesus had to be born and live a life on this earth and then die was so that He could be presented with every conceivable problem and hardship and trial and temptation that any human has ever or will ever face. I am only tempted with certain things. You are only tempted with certain things- but Jesus was tempted with everything. Every single sin was presented to Jesus and without fail he successfully resisted them all.

Jesus was perfectly sinless- He never sinned one time- He never had a bad attitude for even one millisecond. Jesus never had one impure or vengeful thought- He never felt the sting of unforgiveness or experienced the shame of a secret sin. Jesus obeyed all of His Father’s Law perfectly and continuously in thought, word, and deed for every second that He lived down here on this earth.

And we live in a day dear friends, where the sinlessness of Jesus is under assault like never before. A full 40% of all ordained ministers in this country do not believe in the sinlessness of Jesus Christ- according to *Ministries Today Magazine*. So if your Church does not fully accept the sinlessness of Jesus; if your priest or pastor or minister rejects the sinlessness of Jesus Christ- run- don’t walk- run from that Church- because it is evil.

Without the sinlessness of Jesus- nobody goes to Heaven. Because as it is absolutely true that without the shedding of blood- there is no remission of sins- it is equally true that without the imputation of the Righteousness of Jesus Christ to unworthy sinners- nobody goes to Heaven.

So be bold and ask and check into your Church's written Doctrinal Statement and ask your church leader if he believes with every fiber of his being that Jesus was sinless and then if he does- encourage him to continue on in that Truth- but if he doesn't- then you be strong enough to call him to repentance and to turn from his blasphemy and if he refuses to repent- then shake the dust of your shoes off at the door of that church as you leave as a testimony against them.

Like all Biblical Truth- there is no room at all for any discussion about this matter; no room at all for any other opinion. If God did not impute our sins to Jesus on the Cross- then we are still lost. And if God did not impute the Righteousness of Jesus to us based upon the spotless life that Jesus lived- then we are yet in our sins.

So it is Biblically impossible to even discuss Salvation without talking about the fact that we are declared to be righteous by a Sovereign act of God and not because we developed our own personal righteousness based on what we did.

Our great God takes the perfect Righteousness of Jesus that Jesus developed as He lived a sinless life here on this earth and he imputes or credits that Righteousness to us and at that moment- we are just as Righteous and just as fit for Heaven as Jesus Himself is.

And because that Righteousness is not ours; because it does not belong to us and will never belong to us- but because that Righteousness is an *alien* or *foreign* righteousness- because it is Christ's and not ours; and because it is imputed to us *legally* by a legal act of God- and was not given to us because we earned it- and because us being declared Righteous is not based on anything that we did or did not do- therefore nothing that we do or nothing that we do not do can in any way tarnish or diminish or destroy it.

So John was either teaching that the sin unto death was the unpardonable sin that only lost heretics commit or else he was talking about physical death- because the notion that any sin that I commit can destroy my Salvation is not taught in the Bible.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from The New American Standard Bible © 1995 by The Lockmann Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of teachings taken from a verse by verse Journey through the Epistle of 1John. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete copyright statement be at the end of all copies.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.