

Behold What Manner of Love

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

Chapter 28- The Sin Unto Death 265 The Sin Unto Death- Part 8

WAOY Thursday 10/23/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing to go over our verse by verse study of the Epistle of **1 John**, and today we are going to continue to look at what John taught about "the sin that is unto death"- so let's read **1John 5:16&17** again together:

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

Now we have been looking at the second possibility about what John was talking about here when he used the term "sin unto death" in that John may have been talking about a sin that is unto physical death and not eternal death. And the passage that backs up this logic is found in **The Acts 5** where God suddenly and severely brought physical death to two people in the Church who conspired to lie to the Holy Ghost.

And we were discussing last time how that the first initial reaction to this suddenly physical judgment was that great fear came upon those both in and out of the Church. And last time- I was telling you that in this case- that fear was very productive to God's overall Sovereign Plan to build His Church His way- with saved people who love Jesus as opposed to simply filling up a building with warm bodies who are at best lukewarm or not even saved at all.

So great fear was the initial reaction- but what was the second reaction to God judging this sin with instant death? Let's read **The Acts 5:13** together:

And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.

Now just what does Luke mean when he used the phrase “**of the rest durst no man join himself to them**” in this verse? Well, the good doctor was talking about exactly what I have been saying all along- that there are all kinds of reasons why people go to Church- but there is only one right reason- and that is that God has chosen them and drawn them and washed them and saved them, and now these people love God and want to serve Him. That is the only right reason for anyone to go to Church.

Some people go to Church because they are made to go. Others go because they are looking for a wife or a husband, still others go because they want to belong to something bigger than themselves, some go because they like the music, and still others go because they like the preacher. Some go to Church because they think if they go- if they sit on the pew and go through the motions- the Church will pay their bills or give them food while others go so they can be blessed by God or be healed. All of these reasons are *human* reasons and are not the method that Jesus said He would use to build His Church.

Now God can use anything to save a soul, to be sure- but the fact remains that the one single way in which Jesus said that He was going to build His Church was by the faithful and full preaching of the Word of God. And everyone who is chosen will hear, and all who hear will come, and all who come will be received by Jesus, and all whom Jesus receives will be kept by Jesus all the way to Glory. That is God's Plan to build His Church and everything else just gets in the way.

You see, dear friends, when God's Word is preach full and rightly- Jesus Christ is exalted and only Jesus Christ is exalted. And Jesus said in **John 12:32**:

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

When the Word of God is correctly and consistently taught- Christ, and Christ, alone is exalted and glorified. That is why it is so wrong to change the true Gospel and alter it and turn it into a social gospel or a therapeutic gospel or a psychological gospel or a financial gospel. And we live in that day when that is exactly what is being done and it is enormously popular. But it is wrong and it dishonors Jesus and it lies to people and it does nothing to save their souls.

But many times the leaders of the Church are caught away with grand dreams of large buildings and great acclaim, and they become intoxicated with large crowds of people who hang on every word that they speak, and we forget that this whole thing called Church is not about us building our own little kingdoms, but it is about Christ building His Kingdom in us for His Glory and not ours.

There is not one single minister of the Gospel anywhere in the world that is so indispensable to God and so valuable to the success of the Church that God couldn't raise up a rock to replace him. And that is a very humbling thought- but one that we need to speak often to ourselves. We need to be reminded that God did not call us pastors to feed ourselves as we build our ministries on the backs of God's people – God called us to faithfully feed God's sheep because the people are our ministry!

And we are going to have to give an account to God- not of how many people thought we were great but on how faithful we were to tell them the Truth.

So ministry is not about being popular or becoming indispensable to the people- no, true genuine Biblical ministry is when vile lost sinners are saved by Grace and fully surrender to the Sovereign Call of God to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. And as these men stand trembling in the pulpit- thundering the infallible Word of the living God- they hear the most amazing sound in their ears as they preach.

On the one side- these men hear the sounds of the millions of souls who have entered into Paradise- as they rejoice with a sound that is like no other sound on earth, and these men preach with passion and conviction to every heart- tearfully pleading with them to do whatever they have to do, to stop whatever they need to stop, and to start whatever they need to start- so that they will not miss one moment in that Glory with Jesus.

But on the other side these called and chosen ministers hear another sound. It is the sound of the screams of those who burn in hell as they are tormented day and night with fire and brimstone, and these called and chosen preachers preach with passion and conviction to every heart- tearfully pleading with them to do whatever they need to do, to stop whatever they need to stop, and to start whatever they need to

start so that they will never spend one second in hell with the devil and his angles.

And the Bible says in **2Corinthians 5:11**:

Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...

I don't want any man who has not seen hell in all of its horror to teach me *anything* about God, and I don't want any man who has not seen Heaven in all of its Glory to tell me one single thing about God.

But a man who has been profoundly and deeply encouraged by Heaven and a man who has been profoundly and deeply frightened by hell will guard my soul; he will love me enough to correct me and he will watch over me as a shepherd and not a hireling.

And you see, dear friends, only in the Church that Jesus builds are there these kinds of leaders- who would cut off both legs and bleed to death before they would knowingly lead me astray. Only in the Church that Jesus builds are there men who will encourage me and watch over me and exhort me and rebuke me in love so that I will persevere to the end.

So what Luke meant in **The Acts 5:13** is that when God brought instant physical death to Ananias and Sapphira- those who *wanted* to join the Church for the wrong reason- but who were not saved- didn't join the Church. They didn't dare- because they knew that their heart was not right with God and they knew that they might be next if they joined a Church over which Jesus was Head.

Now if all that you have in the Church are genuine, blood bought saints of God who do not value their own lives but who live only to the Glory of God- you have a powerful Church that will honor Jesus and change the world! And if the goal of Jesus is to have that kind of Church then whatever He does to assure that- is Mercy.

It has long been known that anywhere in the world where there is great persecution- the first casualty is that all the dead wood leaves. All those who love this present world head for the hills when the going gets tough. When it becomes illegal to be a practicing Christian- all the lukewarm and unsaved people leave, the backsliders repent, and the Church is filled again with Power and Fire!

And when that happens there is genuine repentance, and there is a genuine turning to the Lord and a love for God and the things of God and a hatred of sin grows among the people.

And the result of that is that all the man-made programs are thrown away, and all the man-made philosophies are cast out, and all the man-made techniques are rejected. And a new found love for God's Word blossoms among the people, and you have to tell them to go home after a two hour Bible Study, and they crave more of God and more of God's Word and more of God's Spirit, and they seek to daily offer their own bodies as a living sacrifice.

Suddenly, what was so important to them is not important at all, and what was not important at all becomes paramount in their lives, and they desire more time with God in prayer, and they seek to share their earthly possessions with the poor, and widows and orphans are tended to, and they diligently look for every opportunity to preach the Gospel to every creature.

And when that happens- Christ is lifted up, and when Christ is lifted up- He draws all manner of men to Himself. Look at the end result of all of this by redoing with me **The Acts 5:14:**

And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)

So the next time you hear someone say or you read some self proclaimed Church growth guru teach that we all need is to wear blue jeans with holes in them and spike our hair and talk like drug addicts in order to win the lost to Jesus- tell them, *"Not so!"*

Tell them that you have read in God's Word where real Church growth came on the heels of instant and severe judgment in the House of God, and as there was a revival of the fear of the Lord- all the lost church members left and believers were the more added to the Lord- multitudes both of men and women.

Now believe it or not- there are some who- in spite of everything we have just read together in the Word- would say that God would never do such things. These people have created their own god who has been fashioned after their own idea of what god should and should not be rather than humble submit to the God of the Bible. And we live in a day when these people hold great sway in the modern Church.

For 20 centuries of Church History- anybody who did not hold to a Biblical view of God and the ways of God was considered to be lost and unsaved and someone who needed prayer. But today these people are seminary professors and they teach Theology at some of our most prestigious universities. They are religious editors of major newspapers and they are authors of bestselling books. They have been set in as Bishops and Elders and Deacons and Pastors and Leaders in the House of God. These are the people who, for the most part, are the face of modern Christianity and they baptize us and give us communion and lay hands on us.

And these are the people who stand to tell us what is right and wrong; what is holy and profane; what pleases God and what pleases Him not; who hold themselves out as representatives of the risen Christ.

According to *Ministries Today Magazine*- 48 % of them hold a view of Jesus that does not include a virgin birth or a sinless life or a Resurrection. 52% of them do not believe in the shed Blood of Jesus or Imputed Righteousness, and almost 80% of them do not believe that the only way to Heaven is through Jesus.

And when you look at these numbers you are tempted to sink into despair except you are reminded that God is Sovereign and the Church still belongs to Jesus and that Judgment must begin at the House of God.

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.

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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.