

# So That You May Know

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

### Chapter 29- The Sin Unto Death

### 272 The Sin Unto Death- Part 12

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WAOY Thursday 10/30/08

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 going over some ways in which this passage in **1John** is misused to develop an unbiblical teaching that says that sin is divided into two groups of "venial" and "mortal" sins.

Those who teach this say that John was talking here about mortal sins when he mentions the "sin that leads to death". And we saw how that these people teach that "mortal sins" are the sins that are so bad that they actually "kill" the Grace of God or destroy the "process" of Salvation that was begun at infant baptism.

Now one of the most important concepts about Salvation that you need to understand, dear friends, is that Justification is *not* a "process". Justification is *not* something that *gradually* happens to a person over a long period of time. 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 there are two parts to being Justified- not one. Everybody knows 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 for some reason is not discussed as much today. You see, before we are saved- we have two problems- not just one. We are sinners and we are unrighteous. So, when we are justified- two things happen:

1. We are forgiven
2. We are made righteous

You see, dear friends, if all that we receive when we are justified is forgiveness- we still couldn't go to Heaven- because in order for *anyone* to go to Heaven- they have to be just as righteous as God is. And being forgiven and being made righteous are not the same thing.

Now even though these two things are different- they are both accomplished in us and for us by the Lord Jesus Christ and what He did here on earth. But one was accomplished by His death- while the other was accomplished by His sinless life.

We are first washed in the precious Blood of Jesus- and that washing is the cleansing or the pardoning or the forgiving of all of our sins- past, present, and future. And it is very important that we realize that this forgiveness is accomplished by what Jesus did for us on the Cross.

You see, God took every single sin that has ever or that will ever be committed by any of his elect and God *imputed* or credited those sins onto Jesus. Now this imputation was a *legal* event- God imputed our sins onto Jesus while in fact Jesus was *personally*- still perfectly sinless. So in a real sense- Jesus was still perfectly sinless but in a *legal* sense- Jesus became sin.

And the reason that this was necessary was so that Jesus could absorb the full fury of God's Wrath against our sins. You see, dear friends, our sins being forgiven by the Crucifixion of Jesus doesn't mean that God just said, "*Oh that's okay- boys will be boys*" and just turned His Face away and pretended not to see our sin. That is *not* what forgiveness does.

No, if God did that- if God allowed even one sin to go unpunished- God Himself would be unrighteous and He would be sinning against His Own Justice. No, the Justice of God *demand*s that every single sin be

punished with eternal damnation. Now I realize that we live in a day when a whole lot of people don't even consider the Justice of God to be of anything important all- but I assure you that God sees the vindication of His Own Justice as being very important. You see, dear friends- to God- it is just as important for God to be Just as it is for God to be Merciful- and at no time does His Mercy outweigh His Justice and at no time does His Justice outweigh His Mercy- but God keeps both His Justice and His Mercy at perfect balance all the time.

So God's Justice must be satisfied by all sin being eternally damned. No one at any time or in any way gets away with sin. And Biblical Grace does not teach that sin doesn't matter anymore to God.

Now there are a number of people in our area who have been deceived by Messianic cults and some have even gone into the false religion of Islam because God's Grace has been either falsely represented to them or they wrongly understand it and they see Grace as being nothing more than leniency and an excuse for people to continue on in sin. And these people also wrongly see God's Law as being the solution. Let me say that the Bible does not teach that.

In fact- I am going to make a very bold statement that may seem terrible to many of you- but it is statement that I nevertheless believe with all my heart to be true. I do not believe that the concept of God's Grace is as clearly understood today as it was back when people were basically illiterate. And I also do not believe that the word, "Gospel" is correctly understood by many today.

And the reason that I say that is precisely because after 2,000 years of Christianity- there are literally millions of people- all over the world- who are still working as hard as they can to *earn* their Salvation. And there are equal numbers who are living in abject terror because they think they can lose their Salvation at any minute. And people think this way- precisely because that is what they have been taught. And that is why it matters what we believe and why we believe it. If only these people correctly understood what the Bible teaches about Grace and the Gospel- they wouldn't think that way.

So here's a quick test to see if you understand Grace and the Gospel and the Law of God properly:

*What is the difference between the Law of God and the Gospel?*

Now if you answered that we are commanded to “keep” or “obey” the Law- you’re right. The Law of God as revealed in the Old Testament is holy and just and good. It came from God- not the devil. And we are commanded to keep the Law of God so that we may live and if we break the Law of God- we die, right?

And we have to remember that we can’t just take a stab at keeping God’s Law periodically. No, keeping God’s Law is not a hobby that we engage in on Sunday Mornings for a couple of hours. No, to keep God’s Law means that you must keep every part of it *perfectly*- without any error at all in any way in either thought, word or deed; and keeping God’s Law means that you must keep it *continuously- all the time*. So, keeping God’s Law means that you must keep all parts of God’s Law perfectly and continuously in thought, word, and deed- 24 hours every day and 7 days every week.

And those who perfectly and continuously keep God’s Law are righteous and those who do *not* perfectly and continuously keep God’s Law are not righteous- they are unrighteous. We must remember, dear friends, that righteousness is correctly determined by adherence to the Law of God. In other words- we must not think that we are righteous unless and until we are in perfect and continuous obedience to God’s Law. And those who are righteous will go to Heaven and those who are unrighteous- go to hell. Simple, isn’t it?

But wait Houston- we have a problem. Anytime somebody begins to tell me that all we need to do to go to Heaven is to keep the Law- I ask them a very simple but serious question- *“How’s that working out for you?”*

Are you in fact keeping all of God’s Law perfectly and continuously in thought, word, and deed 24 hours every day and seven days every week? And the honest answer is , “No”. Now believe it or not I have actually met some people who think that they do obey God’s Law perfectly and continuously- and I try to have pity of those people because they are self-deceived- but the honest man will quickly answer, *“No, I still sin- even when I am trying my hardest not to”*.

And if you were to go back 100 years- you would get the same answer and if you went back and asked Paul and Peter if they kept God’s Law perfectly and continuously- they would tell you, “No”, and if you were to go back and ask Moses- the man that God gave the Law to- he would say the same thing.

So while Salvation is very simple- all you need to do to earn enough righteousness to deserve Heaven is to perfectly and continuously keep God's Law- it is *impossible* for anyone to actually attain that Salvation by and through their obedience- precisely because we all sin. And it is sin that is the great equalizer in the earth. All men sin; all atheists sin; all Buddhists sin; all Muslims sin; all Jews sin; all agnostics sin; all Christians sin; all Republicans sin; all Democrats sin; all Mississippians sin; all Americans sin; all men sin; all women sin; all children sin- every human on earth is guilty of being a transgressor of the Law because we all have in fact broken God's Law.

And let me be very clear about this, dear friends- if you were to muster all your strength and get everybody you know to intercede for you- and somehow keep nine of the ten Commandments for a whole day and the only thing you did wrong that whole day was to look at a woman and lust after her in your heart for one second- the net result of all your effort and all your struggle to perfectly keep nine laws and break only one Law in your heart for only one second is that you are nothing more than a transgressor of the Law and are unrighteous.

We have to remember, dear friends- this is not horseshoes and leaners don't count- you are either totally in adherence to the Law on a continual basis- or else you are a transgressor of the Law. There is no middle ground.

And as a transgressor of the Law- you are not righteous- you are unrighteous. And as unrighteous- you do not qualify as being good enough to go to Heaven. Now please stay with me because all this has to do with the true definition of Grace.

So if you are not keeping God's Law perfectly and continuously 24/7- then you are not righteous. And if you are not righteous- then by default you are unrighteous. And if you are unrighteous- you do not deserve Heaven.

So by rights- Salvation is only earned by those who perfectly and continuously keeps God's Law. And Salvation is not earned by anyone who does not perfectly and continuously keep God's Law. One mistake- even one time- completely eliminates you from being able to earn Heaven based upon what you do.

And some would say, "*But if that is true, Brother Blair- then nobody deserves Heaven!*" And that would be exactly correct. Not one single human being on earth who has ever lived or who is alive now or

who will ever live can ever perfectly and continuously obey God's Law and therefore nobody- I said, nobody- earns enough righteousness through their obedience to deserve Heaven.

And so if you can't acquire enough Righteousness by what *you* do through obedience- how are you going to acquire the righteousness that it takes to go to Heaven? And if you don't deserve Heaven- how are you going to go? One word- Grace; Marvelous, wonderful Grace; Amazing Grace; Unmerited favor; unearned love; and undeserved special treatment. God's merciful Grace.

We must understand, dear friends, that the Law of God was not given to Man so that we would obey it. God knew from the very beginning that no mortal man could ever keep his righteous Law. So it is not true that "good people" keep God's Law while "bad people" don't. No, nobody keeps God's Law.

No, the Law of God was not given simply to convince ungodly people of how ungodly they are. No, the Law of God was given so that good and nice and well behaved and mannerly and wonderful people could be convinced of how ungodly they are too.

We have to remember that Jesus didn't come to save good people- Jesus came to save sinners and the Law was given to convince everyone on earth that in spite of their best efforts at being good- they are nothing but wretched sinners in God's Eyes. The Law was given because we really don't think that we are that bad. So the Law was given to prove to us how sinful we are and to shut every mouth that wants to justify themselves before God based on what they have done and it causes the whole world to be guilty before God.

And by doing that we come to God- without any merit; without any justification- without one single plea- beating our fist against our chest in agony; not able to even lift up our eyes toward Heaven because of the realization of our own guilt and crying out in utter helplessness and despair, "*Have mercy on me a sinner!*"

And Mercy rewrites our life and Grace catches our falling soul and God's Love is shed abroad into our hearts as holy red Blood washes down on us and as God takes the sinless spotless Righteousness of Jesus Christ and drapes it over us in the greatest act of Power and Glory that they world has ever seen. That is Grace.

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.