

April 14, 2019
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***THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS:
23. “The Danger in Deliberately Sinning”***
Hebrews 10:26 – 31

Introduction:

This morning we are reengaging in our study of the letter to the Greek-speaking Hebrew Christians. These ethnic Jewish people had come to believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior, having heard the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. They responded to the Gospel and received His presence in their lives, His indwelling Holy Spirit.

The author writes to refocus his readers attention on Jesus: His atoning sacrifice for our sins, His precious blood shed to cleanse us of sin, His resurrection life and victory over sin, death, and all the powers of Hell! He appeals to them to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit dwelling in their hearts. His role in our lives is to **Focus** our **Attention** on **Jesus**, to enforce in us what Jesus has done for all of us is the one offering for sin the Father has accepted.

Where the Holy Spirit comes to dwell, He lives in that life. He makes Himself known in that human life, in character, in mindset, in will, and in our desires! Paul writes in Romans 8:16 about the Holy Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are God’s sons and daughters in Christ Jesus: *“The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.”*

The distinguishing characteristic of His presence in our lives is the agape love of God burning in our hearts and lives. So, the author writes about the primary truth: What we do for God in works and deeds is always a result of having opened our hearts to receive the ministry of the Holy Spirit within us, motivating us to **Loving Obedience!** It is the holy, self-emptying, other-oriented love of God poured out into us that moves us to obedience to His commands!

Romans 5:5 *“And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he has given us.”* Always and forever the truth remains, **the love of God dwelling in and burning in a human heart is the proof of our salvation.** Our works and deeds we do, as we seek to follow Jesus in life, must flow from the **Constraint** of His holy **Love** burning in our hearts!

II Corinthians 5:14, 15 *“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore, all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”*

There is a reason why we must know and understand the truth about being motivated by the love of God shed abroad in our hearts as we respond to what Jesus did for us on the Cross by faith. This entire letter is a call to **Perseverance** in the **Walk** of **Faith** in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Our author is pleading with his readers to remain in Christ Jesus, so that His Word may remain in us!

Hebrews 3:6 “*But Christ is faithful as a son over God’s house. And we are his house if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.*”

Hebrews 3:14 “*We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.*”

Hebrews 6:11 “*We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure.*”

Hebrews 10:35, 36 “*So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.*”

The author urges his readers to go on believing Jesus and to press in to the heart of God when we walk in trials, hardships, and days of suffering. **The motto is true: “The Love of God can Keep you where Obedience to Rules cannot Take you!”** The truth is the love of God dwelling in our hearts will keep us steadfast in faith in situations and circumstances that are so difficult our strength and our obedience will falter.

As the author writes this letter to his first century readers, they were perilously close to **Apostasy**, falling away from their sincere faith relationship with Jesus Christ, precisely because they were reverting to **Legalism**. They were in grave danger of returning to human **Works Righteousness**, that is salvation by works, or keeping of the Laws of God.

In that light, as we study this amazing letter, there are **Seven** specific **Warning Passages** in this book of Hebrews. Each of the warnings gets increasingly strong, pleading with the reader to not fall away from or abandon their faith in Jesus Christ, to go believing in His powerful atoning work to save them.

Warning number one is in Hebrews 2:1 – 3 – Pay careful attention to the message of the Gospel you have heard so that you do not drift away from your salvation in Christ Jesus.

Warning number two is in Hebrews 3:12 – 14 – Do not have a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God, but encourage each other to walk in faith in Jesus.

Warning number three is in Hebrews 4:1 – 3 – Let us be careful to enter in to salvation in Christ Jesus, that none of us is found to have fallen short of walking with the Spirit of Jesus by faith.

Warning number four is in Hebrews 6:4 – 8 – The author speaks a very intense warning: It is impossible for those who have fallen away from the faith to be brought back to repentance because in their hearts, minds, wills, and actions, they have put Jesus back on the Cross!

This morning we will study warning number five found in Hebrews 10:26 – 31. This warning passage is a clear call to the saved, those who have come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord, to remain faithful and steadfast in their faith relationship with Jesus. The author pleads with His readers to know and love Jesus, to avoid walking back into deliberate sinning!

I. The Essence of our Salvation Experience in Christ Jesus:

Ephesians 2:8 – 10 *“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”*

In this great text Paul tells the Ephesian Christians that we are **Saved** by God’s **Grace**, that is the completed action of God, His great grace and mercy, **Through** our **Faith** in Jesus, what He has done to save us. We are not saved by grace alone and we are not saved by love alone. We are saved by grace through faith, and even the faith is the gift of God and not of human works!

In order for us to understand why our author of Hebrews is writing this warning to people about the grave **Danger** of **Falling Away** from their faith in Jesus, it is vitally important that we understand what it means to be saved by God’s actions of grace, through our faith in what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us on the Cross!

What Jesus has done for us is the only way to be saved from a life of sinning! Our victory over sin’s power to drag us to Hell is in Jesus: **The shedding of His precious blood, His body bearing away from us our sins, and in His resurrection life, power, victory over sin, death and all the powers of Hell!**

Our salvation experience is the completed action of God Almighty by His Holy Spirit who comes to live in our hearts, making our spirit-being that was dead in sin, alive unto God in Christ Jesus. When we hear the Gospel message of Christ Jesus crucified, when we believe what Jesus did on the Cross was for each one of us personally, and receive His Holy Spirit’s presence in our lives, the Word of God teaches we are **Born Again**, or **Born** of the **Spirit**.

Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus, who was a highly respected leader of Judaism in the time of Christ. Jesus told Nicodemus all of us enter into a relationship with His Father the same way, we all must be born again. We must be made alive in our spirit by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit coming to live in our hearts and lives:

John 3:5, 6 *“I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.”*

In this incredibly wonderful action of God in saving a human heart and soul, there are three aspects that are addressed by the Apostle Paul in this paragraph written to the Ephesian Christians:

Aspect #1 is the **Action** of God’s Spirit coming to find our individual hearts, **Convicting** us of our **Need** of a **Savior**. When we are walking in days of conviction of His Spirit, we see our guilt, we feel the weight of our sins, and we are brought into a stark reality; “I need a Savior!”

Aspect #2 is the believer in Jesus seeing and understanding the truth in a very real and personal way, when Jesus died on that Cross and shed His precious blood, they were **My Sins** that He

Bore and it was my **Guilt** that Jesus **Cleansed!** The believer in Jesus Christ repents of sin and believes the truth that my sins are all pardoned and my guilt is all gone!

Aspect #3 is the believer in Jesus opening his/her heart and welcomes the Holy Spirit to **Come** and **Live** in us, making our **Spirit-Being** that was dead in sins now alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord! When the Holy Spirit comes to live in our heart and soul, **it is the completed, saving action of God Almighty in that life of the redeemed child of God.**

II. The Threat and Horror of Living in Deliberate Sin:

Hebrews 10:26, 27 NLT “*Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received a full knowledge of the truth, there is no other sacrifice that will cover these sins. There will be nothing to look forward to but the terrible expectation of God’s judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies.*”

This fifth warning passage in this letter is another impassioned plea from our author to the readers to never permit themselves to get to the point of apostasy, turning deliberately away from their faith in Jesus and returning to a life characterized by deliberate sinning. His words here are almost without parallel in the entire New Testament. **Few authors have the Intensity and Sheer Horror of willful sinning after we have been saved, born of God’s Spirit!**

The author takes his readers to their understanding of the Old Covenant, back to Deuteronomy 17:2 – 7. In that passage Moses tells the people what they are to do with a person who deliberately turns away from following the Lord God Almighty, turns instead to idolatry, going after strange gods, worshipping them with awful and lewd behaviors. Listen to the counsel God gave Moses to share with His people, when such persons were found in their community.

Deuteronomy 17:4 – 6 “*When you hear about it, investigate the matter thoroughly. If it is true that this detestable thing has been done in Israel, then that man or woman must be taken to the gates of the town and stoned to death. But never put a person to death on the testimony of only one witness. There must always be at least two or three witnesses.*”

Our author has this deep horror of willful and deliberate sinning for good reasons. First and probably foremost in his thinking was the amount of persecution that was taking place in the lives of the people of God in the first century. The Christians were under attack essentially from three sides when this letter was written:

1. They were the threat of punishment, imprisonment, and sometimes death from their legalistic Jewish **Religious Leaders**. It is difficult to read the book of Acts carefully and miss the amount of beatings, imprisonment, and death the people who knew and loved Jesus had faced and would face again from legalistic and religious zealots of the Jewish faith. One of the chief persecutors in the early chapters of Acts is Saul of Tarsus, turned Paul the Apostle of Christ after his miraculous conversion.

2. They were also under the threat of beatings and imprisonment from those who were the **Leaders** of the **Worship** of the **gods**, in any given region or city in the first century. Often, we

see those who preached to good news of Jesus Christ beaten, stoned with stones, or beaten with rods by those who saw themselves as caretakers of any given god: Diane of the Ephesians comes to mind!

3. They were also under the increasing threat of imprisonment, beatings, and death from the **Roman Government**. Just a few years before this writing the Emperor Nero blamed the great fire of Rome, which burned three parts of the city in AD 64, on Christians and expelled them from their homes in Rome. This fueled hatred of the Christians in the first century.

Second, and probably of equal importance, the author thinks about the **Negative Testimony** of people who have professed their faith in Jesus, loyalty and love to Christ, then in turn live like anyone else in their spheres of influence lives, sinning freely while claiming to know and follow Jesus in life. One of the great perils of the Church of Jesus is its members living in apostasy, willfully choosing to sin while calling themselves Christians!

One survey I read recently was taken as an opinion poll of those who are under thirty-five years of age. They were asked the reasons why so many of them have left the church and have no plans to ever go back. Their number one answer was **Hypocrisy** in the **Lives** of the **Professing Christians** who push for them to go to church, those they know in their spheres of influence who live one way on Sunday and entirely differently, blatantly sinning the rest of the week!

I know all of us have done things for which we are deeply sorry, there have been apologies needed and made. We have chosen to follow the voice of self-interest, and not chosen to follow the inner voice of self-emptying love. When we do, we grieve inside and our inner **Godly Sorrow** leads us to **Repentance**! But what we are talking about here is people who refuse the conviction of the Holy Spirit and choose rather to live in sin, repeatedly breaking our inner moral compass!

The difference between the **Committed** Christian who desires to know and love Jesus for a lifetime and the **Hypocritical** Christian is how we respond when we have done something that breaks our heart, grieves the Holy Spirit, for which we feel guilty. One heart leans in to the Cross of Christ and the other heart leans away from the Cross of Christ!

III. The Definition of Living in Willful Sinning:

Hebrews 10:29 – 31 NLT *“Think how much more terrible the punishment will be for those who have trampled on the Son of God and have treated the blood of the covenant as if it were common and unholy. Such people have insulted and enraged the Holy Spirit who brings God’s mercy to people. For we know the one who said, ‘I will take vengeance. I will repay those who deserve it.’ He also said, ‘The Lord will judge his own people.’ It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”*

The author leaves us no room to doubt what he means when he uses the terms “**Deliberately Continue Sinning**” after we have received a personal knowledge of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ our Lord. He gives us three very clear words about what a life characterized by willfully sinning looks like:

First, he says, **Trample** Christ **Under** our **Feet**. This level of sinning in the human heart and soul requires some thought and explanation. What the author describes to us here is the person who deliberately chooses to **Spurn** the **Love** of Jesus Christ our Lord poured out into his/her heart and soul by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

This is not describing the mere choice to walk in transgression against what we know to be true. This is descriptive of the awful internal message received in and through the **Wounding of Love**. The human heart and soul can stand almost any attack against his body, the blows of an enemy cannot beat him into submission. But to be intentionally hurt by someone we love, **Breaks** the **Heart** from the inside out!

This internal wounding of love is what the person does to the magnificent heart of Jesus; who having come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord turns on Jesus, deliberately spurns the love of the Son of God and turns instead to willful sinning! They wound Jesus' heart of love!

Second, he says, **Treats** as common and unholy, the **Precious Blood** of Jesus that redeemed us. There is nothing that produces a deep inner revulsion in the human heart like seeing deliberate sacrilege! Notice with me what the author says the blood that Jesus shed for us does to the human heart and soul it touches: The **Blood** of Jesus that **Sanctifies** him!

This leaves little room to argue the person who does this doesn't know what he/she is doing. What he describes in the paragraph is the inner **Cleansing** of the **Conscience** that is the mark of the New Covenant made alive in the worshiper's heart and soul. The author says the person calls the blood of Jesus "koinon," meaning unclean or common, which is an ultimate insult, indicating clear derision and disdain in the heart of the one who speaks it!

In Matthew 15:11 Jesus told his hearers it wasn't the legalistic washing of hands and cleaning of cups and bowls that defile a person make them "koinon." It is what proceeds from the heart and is spoken through their mouth that makes a person "koinon," "unclean, profane, unholy!"

Third, he says, those who choose deliberate sinning have **Insulted** the **Spirit** of **Grace**. The author uses a word from classical Greek that is found nowhere else in the entire New Testament: "enubrisas." The term means "insulting, mocking, sneering derogation," of the precious works of the Holy Spirit who has come to live in our lives because Jesus has cleansed us of sin at the Cross!

When the term is used in the medical field it means what happens to an ulcer when you pour salt into it. When used as a noun it means the victim of outrage from another person. When he uses it to describe how someone would mock or insult the Holy Spirit, he is talking about a **Hard Heart** that has become **Full** of **Pride** and is **Reprobate!** "Come on Pastor Ken, we all know we can sin and God will forgive us!" "Why this high-pressure sales tactic, Pastor?"

How does God respond to those who have once been enlightened by faith in Jesus and decide to turn away from Jesus living a life of unrepentance and deliberately sinning? Judgment, vengeance, and eternal Hell! *"He also said, 'The Lord will judge his own people.' It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS:
23. "The Danger in Deliberately Sinning!"
Hebrews 10:26 – 31

Introduction:

We are in a study of the Book of Hebrews, which was written to refocus them on Jesus. He appeals to the reader to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, who will **F** _____ our **A** _____ on Jesus!

Where the Holy Spirit lives, He makes Himself known. He will bear witness to those in whom He lives!
Romans 8:16

The author speaks the primary truth: What we do for God must always be as a result of having the Holy Spirit inspire us to **L** _____ **O** _____!

Our good deeds must be rooted in the Holy Spirit pouring out His love into our hearts, Romans 5:5. It is always about the **C** _____ of **L** _____.

This entire letter is a call to **P** _____ in our **W** _____ of **F** _____ in our Lord Jesus Christ.
Hebrews 3:6; 3:14; 6:11; 10:35, 36

The author urges his readers to love God deeply when they walked in hardship and suffering. The motto: The **L** _____ of God can **K** _____ you where **O** _____ to laws cannot **T** _____ you!

His readers were perilously close to **A** _____, to falling away from their faith by reverting to **L** _____ with its guilt-motivation to obey God out of human works righteousness!

There are seven clear **W** _____ **P** _____ in his letter, pleading with the reader to heed the warnings to not fall away from or abandon their faith in Jesus Christ! 2:1 – 3; 3:12 – 14; 4:1 – 3; 6:4 – 6

This morning we are studying the fifth warning passage, Hebrews 10:26 – 31; do not return to living a life of deliberate sinning!

I. The Essence of our Salvation Experience in Christ Jesus: Eph. 2:8 – 10

In this great text Paul writes that we are saved by God's **G** _____, the completed action of God, **T** _____ our **F** _____ in Jesus' atoning sacrifice for our sins. If we are to see the **D** _____ of falling away, we must understand what it means to be saved by God's grace!

When we hear the Gospel message and believe what Jesus did on the Cross was for us personally, the Holy Spirit comes to live in us making us to be **B** _____ **A** _____ or born of the Spirit John 3:5 and 6!

Three aspects to our salvation experience in Christ Jesus:

1. The action of God's Spirit in us **C** _____ us of our need of a Savior.
2. We believe Jesus bore **M** _____ **S** _____ and has **C** _____ me of my **G** _____.
3. We invite the Holy Spirit to **C** _____ into our hearts and **L** _____ in our spirit making us **A** _____ to God in Christ Jesus!

II. The Threat and Horror of Living in Deliberate Sin: Hebrews 10:26, 27

The author writes impassioned pleas to not live in deliberate sin. Few authors in the N.T. have the **I** _____ and **S** _____ **H** _____ of willful sinning after we have been saved!

He takes his readers to Deuteronomy 17:2 – 7 and what happened to a person who was apostate and idolatrous in Israel ...

The author is concerned for them as they first, faced **P**_____. This came from three different groups of people: 1. **L**_____ Jewish leaders, 2. From the leaders of the **W**_____ of the gods, 3. The Roman government...

Second, he is concerned about the **N**_____ **T**_____ of church members who professed to know Jesus and who freely sinned throughout the week. The difference between committed Christians and hypocritical Christians is what we do when we are **C**_____!

III. The Definition of Living in Willful Sinning: Hebrews 10:29 – 31

The author leaves no room for doubt about what he means by his terms; **D**_____
C_____ **S**_____.

First, **T**_____ Christ **U**_____ your **F**_____. He is describing the person who **S**_____ the **L**_____ of Jesus. He describes the awful message received from the wounding of loved ones breaking our heart.

Second, **T**_____ as common and unholy the precious **B**_____ of Jesus that **S**_____ him. The terms mean: “sneering and mocking.”

Third, those who deliberately choose to **I**_____ the **S**_____ of **G**_____. He is describing a heart that is hard, full of pride, reprobate!

How does God respond to people who choose to live like this?

Discussion Starter Questions for Home Groups

1. Why does the author of the letter to the Hebrews give his readers seven clear warning passages? What is his burden on his heart as he writes the letter?
2. Why is it so important for us to always be sure to do our acts of obedience constrained by love? Who prompts us to be motivated by love?
3. What are your thoughts on the importance of continuing in our faith? Why is it such an inward struggle to be constant and steadfast in our faith?
4. What is on Paul's heart as he writes to the Ephesian Christians about what it means to be truly saved by God's grace through our faith? Why does he use both terms "by grace through faith," in his theology of our salvation?
5. The author speaks about choosing to turn away from following Jesus with a level of intensity not often seen in Scripture. Why is it so emotional?
6. What role does persecution have in the lives of believers today worldwide? What happens in believers to make them cave in to persecution?
7. What do you think the author wants his readers to know and understand as he writes the three definitions of living in continuous willful sinning? What does he want them to see in those definitions?
8. Read together aloud Luke 15:11 - 32 and discuss insights you have from the story of the Prodigal Son and his father, who longed for him to come home.
9. Read together aloud Hebrews 6:1 - 6 and discuss insights you have regarding holding fast to our faith in Jesus' redeeming work for us all on the Cross.
10. What are some things the Holy Spirit spoke to you about the importance of persevering in your faith as you heard the message? What did you personally feel as the author wrote his definitions, as he was defining willful sinning?