

## SINS WHICH LEAD TO DEATH

1 John 5:16-21

6/13/04

Many people seem to believe that God is more tolerant today than He was in the days of the Old Testament.

I have dealt with people who have chosen to live lives of disobedience and rebellion because they felt that God would forgive them anyway.

**“I’ll take my chances with God.”**

Can we now live as we please, with the assurance that God will accept us?

Will God shower us with unconditional love no matter what we do?

**Is a Christian young person free to live with a boyfriend or girlfriend before marriage?**

**Are we free to watch risqué movies or dabble with pornography?**

**Are we free to be greedy and dishonest?**

**Is it safer to sin today that it was in the days of the OT?**

### **1. Is God More Tolerant Today Than He Was In The Old Testament?**

**The Old Testament prescribed the death penalty for a dozen or so different sins.**

- Both adulterers and homosexuals were to be stoned to death
- Rebellious teens and those who cursed their parents
- Those who practiced witchcraft
- Those who worshiped idols or who blasphemed the true God

- Several other crimes such as kidnapping, rape, incest and murder were also prescribed the death penalty.

In the OT, God Himself directly took the lives of many who rebelled.

- Genesis 6-8 (6:5-7)- The universal flood
- Exodus- The 10 plagues on Egypt
- Leviticus 10:1-3 Nadab and Abihu
- Numbers 11:1-3 Fire consumes complainers
- Numbers 14:36-37 The 10 men who brought back a bad report at Kadesh-Barnea
- Numbers 16:1-35 (1-3, 31-35) Dathan, Abiram and 250 members of Korah's family died in an earthquake and fire sent forth from the Lord.
- Numbers 16:41-50 (49) 14,700 of those who grumbled against Moses
- Numbers 25:9 24,000 died in a plague because of idolatry and immorality with the women of Moab.
- 2 Samuel 6 Uzzah

Is there no reason to fear the wrath, judgment, and discipline of God anymore?

Can behavior that received the death penalty in the OT now be engaged in with impunity today?

Is God more tolerant today than He used to be?

The answer is, "No, God has not changed?"

- God has not lowered His standards.
- He has not mellowed with age.

**Hebrews 10:31** It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

**Hebrews 12:29** for our God is a consuming fire.

**Revelation-** The seal, trumpet, and bowl judgments

## **Revelation 20-** The Great White Throne judgment and the Lake of Fire- Hell

Our passage this morning is a serious warning to Christians who may choose to disregard God in the way they live.

### **2. Sins Which Lead To Death 5:16-17**

#### **a. What sin leads to death?**

- Originally and ultimately all sin leads to death.
  - ♦ Genesis 3
  - ♦ Romans 6:23
  - ♦ Ephesians 2:1ff
- But in 1 John 5:16-17 John is referring to sins that may lead to the immediate physical death of the person who sinned.
  - ♦ NT examples
    - ◇ Acts 5 Ananias and Sapphira (I have met modern day Ananiases and Sapphiras who have not died)
    - ◇ 1 Corinthians 5:5 *I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*
    - ◇ 1 Corinthians 11:30 For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.
- The sin unto death isn't any one particular sin.
- The sin unto death can be any act of sin or rebellion against God.
  - ♦ This would be particularly true of sins that are defiant or premeditated and those that a person is unwilling to repent of.

- A Christian can sin to the point where God brings about his physical death.
  - ♦ This is not talking about the loss of salvation, but of physical death.

**b. How should we pray for fellow-Christians who are sick because of God's discipline? v. 16**

- **v. 16a** We are to pray for the sick and give an opportunity for those who have sinned to repent and confess sin if that is the issue.
  - ♦ **James 5:14-16** Is anyone among you sick? *Then* he must call for the elders of the church and they are to **pray** over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; 15 and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. **16 Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed.** The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.
- **v. 16b** But there comes a point where no amount of intercessory prayer will be effective for deliberate high-handed sin.
  - ♦ **Jeremiah 7:16** "As for you, do not pray for this people, and do not lift up cry or prayer for them, and do not intercede with Me; for I do not hear you.

**c. What does it mean by "a sin that does not lead to death?" v. 17**

- Most sins don't lead to immediate death.
- God is generally long-suffering and merciful with us.
  - ♦ But don't presume upon God's mercy.
  - ♦ Don't abuse God's goodness.
  - ♦ Don't exhaust His patience.

- ◇ Repent, confess, and forsake your sin while you still have the opportunity.
- The purpose of our salvation is to make possible our holy lives.
  - ◆ That we no longer serve our sinful passions.
  - ◆ **1 Peter 1:14-19** As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." 17 If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*; 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.
- **Oswald Chambers:** The essence of sin is the refusal to recognize that we are accountable to God at all.

### 3. Things We Know 5:18-20

#### a. We know that no one who is born of God sins. v. 18

- *Sins*- present active indicative- continues in the practice of sin.
- *He who is born of God keeps him*
  - ◆ Christ keeps the person who is born of God from living a life of sin.
  - ◇ Sanctification
  - ◇ Discipline
  - ◇ Protection from the evil one

- *the evil one does not touch him*- the word *touch* does not speak of a superficial touch, but of a grasping and holding onto.

**b. We know that we are of God. v. 19a**

- We belong to God.
  - ♦ We are His children.
    - ◇ John 1:12
    - ◇ 1 John 3:1-2
    - ◇ Romans 8:16-17 The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.

**c. We know that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. v. 19b**

- He influences its values, fashions, philosophies, and entertainment.

**d. We know that the Son of God has come. v.20a**

**e. We know that He has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true. v. 20b cf 1 Corinthians 2:14**

**f. We know that we are in Him who is true and in His Son Jesus Christ. v. 20c**

- This is the true God.
- This is eternal life.
  - ♦ 2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

**4. A Final Warning 5:21**

***Keep yourselves from idols.***

- Strange closing
- What is he referring to? What is an idol?
  - ♦ Anything that has a higher priority in your life than the worship and service to God does.
  - ♦ Colossians 3:5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to **idolatry**.

**Are you prepared to meet God?**

Never interpret the silence of God as the indifference of God.

**2 Peter 3:7-12**

**Hebrews 12:25-26** See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned *them* on earth, much less *will* we *escape* who turn away from Him who *warns* from heaven. 26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN."

**Hebrews 2: 3a** how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

**Romans 2:5** But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,

**Revelation 20:13-15** And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

**1 John 5:11-13**