

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 29- The Sin Unto Death

264 The Sin Unto Death- Part 4

WAOY Tuesday 10/14/08

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 just what John was teaching here by exploring two possible answers to what the sin unto death might be.

And we were exploring the first possibility that the sin unto death is a sin to *eternal* death in that some lost people commit by blaspheming the Holy Spirit. And the Scripture passage that teaches this- is found in **Matthew 12:31&32**, where Jesus said:

31 "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven.

32 "Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the *age to come*.

Now this is a frightening passage and one that we need to take great heed with because if you blaspheme the Holy Spirit- you will not ever be forgiven. So, you best not do that.

But we live in a day when unscrupulous hirelings put unwarranted fear in the hearts of many of God's people by equating the Truth of what Jesus taught here with what they are doing and the two are not the same.

I can't even begin to tell you the number of people who have sat in my office in abject terror because they were told by some man that they had committed this sin simply because they didn't agree with some activities that was going on in their Church. Some have even shared with me that their spiritual leaders told them they had blasphemed the Holy Spirit and were in danger of eternal damnation simply because they asked a question.

Listen, blaspheming the Holy Spirit is a very serious thing but we need to take what Jesus actually said about it and not add to it or take anything away from it.

First of all- simply because a person doesn't understand something that is going on in their Church is not a sign of blasphemy. Also, asking legitimate questions about a particular practice of the Church is not blaspheming either. We are commanded by Scripture to test the spirits to see if they are of God precisely because all spirits are not of God; and all men are not truthful; and all activities that go on in the modern Church are not Scriptural even though they may be accepted and popular.

And any real minister of the Gospel worth his salt welcomes genuine questions and honest criticism for two reasons:

1. A true man of God welcomes light and examination of what he is doing and teaching because he does not want to deceive anyone and he realizes all too well that he is flesh and he is capable of making huge mistakes and so he welcomes people to hold him accountable to Scripture to help guard his own soul.
2. A true man of God wants all glory and honor to go to Jesus and not to himself and so he runs away from praise and he will not accept worship and adoration from anyone. Yet even though that is true- the praise of men is intoxicating and- like money- can and does corrupt the best among us. So a true man of God welcomes honest criticism of his ministry so that he can make sure that Jesus is being exalted by his ministry and not himself.

So anyone who teaches that people asking honest questions so they can understand- is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit- is either woefully ignorant of what blasphemy really is or they are so caught up in their own importance that they are trying to instill fear into people's hearts so they can manipulate you into not holding them accountable- and either one of these is real bad.

When a man begins to believe his own press reports about his own value to God and his own gifts from God and his own importance to the people- he is already off base and is on the road to certain destruction. His only hope at this point is to either repent and confess his sin and learn to be broken again or he can try to scare as many people as he can into not holding him accountable to Scripture so he can maintain his credibility with them. And this happens a whole lot more than you would care to know.

Now this is a classic definition of a cult and one of the most common tactics that the ungodly leaders of these cults use to hold people in line so that they will not even question what they say is to twist what Jesus taught right here.

These self- appointed "prophets" and "apostles" will teach that God speaks directly to them and that they have special insight and special anointings and special gifts that the people need in order for them to get into right standing with God and to function in this life. And this gives these people credibility in the eyes of the people. And because the people of these cults are never taught the Word of God properly- over time- they become hopelessly dependent upon that person for everything- including being in right standing with God.

The millions of people of these cults throughout history are always taught that to doubt or to even question anything that the leader says is tantamount to blaspheming the Holy Spirit- and so a strange perverted fear develops in their hearts- that is *not* a healthy reverential fear of God- but it is a warped, mindless fear- that prevents them from ever getting on the bad side of their leaders.

And this kind of spiritual manipulation causes otherwise intelligent people to suspend rational thinking; Scriptural reasoning; and spiritual discernment and every verse of the Bible is now seen through the warped lens of their own personal situation and false teaching.

And at this point- it takes a miracle of God to free these people from this cult- because they will lie, steal, cheat; engage in sexual and

financial sins and do almost anything else- to maintain a right standing with this leader because in their mind- if they break away from that false leader- they have lost their contact with God.

Now most of the people of these cults are innocent victims of evil and wicked people who *knowingly* manipulate them for their own glory. But the leaders themselves are not innocent at all. They are what Jude calls them in **Jude 4**:

For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

And in verse 8:

Yet in the same way these men, also by dreaming, defile the flesh, and reject authority, and revile angelic majesties.

And then Jude was moved along by God the Holy Spirit to pronounce Judgment against these self- appointed false teachers in **Jude 11-13**, when he said:

11 Woe to them! For they have gone the way of Cain, and for pay they have rushed headlong into the error of Balaam, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.

12 These are the men who are hidden reefs in your love feasts when they feast with you without fear, caring for themselves; clouds without water, carried along by winds; autumn trees without fruit, doubly dead, uprooted;

13 wild waves of the sea, casting up their own shame like foam; wandering stars, for whom the black darkness has been reserved forever.

Then Jude continued to describe the characteristics of these false teachers when he wrote this in **Jude 16-19**:

16 These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their *own* lusts; they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of *gaining an* advantage.

17 But you, beloved, ought to remember the words that were spoken beforehand by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,

18 that they were saying to you, "In the last time there will be mockers, following after their own ungodly lusts."

19 These are the ones who cause divisions, worldly-minded, devoid of the Spirit.

And then Jude is faithful to give us the *solution* on how to keep these evil and ungodly men from gaining influence in our lives and how to rescue those that we love who have been deceived by these heretics in **Jude 20-23**:

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life.

22 And have mercy on some, who are doubting;

23 save others, snatching them out of the fire; and on some have mercy with fear, hating even the garment polluted by the flesh.

So needless to say- exposing these people as the heretics that they are and denouncing their evil deeds as being evil and holding what they teach accountable to the authority of Scripture is not blaspheming the Holy Ghost at all- it is being obedient to the Holy Ghost Who taught us in **1John 4:1**:

Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

And it is being faithful to what the Lord Jesus said in **Matthew 24:4**, when He said:

... See to it that no one misleads you.

We are living in very powerful days, dear friends, and now, more than ever- we need to exercise spiritual discernment and try the spirits so that we will not be deceived and so that we may remain faithful to Jesus.

The Apostle Peter was moved along by God the Holy Spirit to give us insight on just why we need to be on guard about things like this when he wrote **2Peter 2:1-3** that says:

1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.

2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;

3 and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

So while blaspheming the Holy Spirit is unforgiveable- and may well be the “sin unto death” that John wrote about here- holding the leaders of the Church’s feet to the fire and accountable to Scripture and to expect that a true man of God will graciously and humbly feed the sheep and will refuse to feed himself- is *not* committing this unpardonable sin. And when unbiblical practices are going on in the Church- you are not blaspheming the Holy Spirit to reject them and denounce them.

So the bottom line to this aspect of what John is teaching here is that only wicked, evil, ungodly lost, unsaved, unregenerate people can truly blaspheme the Holy Spirit and truly this is a sin unto eternal death because it shall not ever be forgiven them.

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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