

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 29- The Sin Unto Death

267 The Sin Unto Death- Part 7

WAOY Wednesday 10/22/08

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 over the last several broadcasts- we have been exploring just what John was talking about here when he mentions the sin that leads to death. And I told that that this is a very controversial passage in God's Word over which much debate has raged for many years.

And we saw last time that- in my opinion- based upon my own best honest research- there are only two possible answers to just what John meant when he used the term, "**sin that leads to death**" that doesn't contradict any other verse:

A. John many have been talking about a sin that is unto *eternal* death as in the unpardonable sin of blaspheming the Holy Ghost as Jesus taught in **Matthew 12**

B. John may have been talking about a sin that is unto *physical* death as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira as Luke recorded for us in **The Acts 5**.

And on the last broadcast- we were looking at the second possibility-

that John when John used the phrase, “the sin that leads to death” he was talking about a sin that is unto a *physical* death rather than an *eternal* death. And we were looking at a time that Dr. Luke recorded for us in **The Acts 5** where two people in the Church were instantly judged with physical death because they lied to the Holy Spirit. So, let’s read that passage again together:

1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property,
2 and kept back *some* of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back *some* of the price of the land?

4 "While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

5 And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it.

6 The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him.

7 Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

8 And Peter responded to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?" And she said, "Yes, that was the price."

9 Then Peter *said* to her, "Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out *as well*."

10 And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

11 And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.

12 At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's portico.

13 But none of the rest dared to associate with them; however, the people held them in high esteem.

14 And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to *their number*,

Now you can debate with me all day long about whether or not a loving God would do anything like this- but evidently God indeed did do this or else the Bible isn't true because here it is in black and white. And I also want to remind those of you who think that this kind of preaching is mean or hard or unloving or even unchristian that I didn't write this passage and when Luke wrote it- he never even consulted with me about whether this ought to be in the Bible or not. I mean- I never even got a call.

And to those of you who insist that *your* "god" would never do anything like this- may I suggest to you that you have the wrong god because the God of the Bible- the Father of Jesus Christ absolutely *did* judge these two people with immediate physical death.

Now some modern Church growth gurus have stated that this is the wrong approach to take when trying to build the membership of the Church. That in these men's esteemed opinion- God made a terrible mistake here by letting it be known that if you conspire to lie to the Holy Spirit in that Church- God will kill you.

But again- the Head of the Church- Jesus Christ- Who bought and paid for the Church with His Own Blood- is going to build His Church the way that He sees fit and He really doesn't need the counsel of any man who is himself in need of Grace and forgiveness.

Now what was the *initial* reaction from this act of instant judgment? Let's read **The Acts 5:11**:

And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.

Now you have to wonder why fear was the first response to this instant judgment. And one possibility is that Ananias and Sapphira were not the only two people in the Church lying. Others were actively lying or were thinking about it and when they saw God's Righteous anger against this sin and when they saw two people who were otherwise in good standing with the Church fall down dead- great fear came upon them that they might be next.

Now I have said this before concerning this kind of judgment. Many times- all throughout the Bible- people, cities, and even nations are judged by God in very dramatic and cataclysmic ways- not because they are the only ones who are sinning and not even because their sins are

the worst- but God does this periodically in the earth to remind people that He is God and that sin is a horrible offense to Him and that He knows that we are guilty too. So by judging the few- the many will receive this great fear and through the fear of God- wisdom and knowledge are brought forth and there is always a corresponding reduction in sin.

Many of the great revivals all throughout history came as the result of terrible disasters and personal tragedies. So God does indeed judge in this way because of this one single fundamental truth about God that we all need to remember:

God is much more interested in us being holy and in right standing with Him than He is in us being safe or secure.

And that means that *whatever* God uses to encourage His people to repent and to turn *away* from their own wicked ways and turn toward Him is therefore a demonstration of His great Love and Mercy and is *always* a catalyst for revival. And we also need to remember, dear friends, that true genuine Biblical revival is not three days of jumping around and falling on the floor and reaching an emotional high. Revival is not even physical healing or financial prosperity because most of the time that people are healed- they don't serve God and history proves to us that money almost always makes us drunk with pleasure.

No, true, genuine, Biblical revival is when great fear comes upon God's people and there is a corresponding *decrease* of sin in our lives and the result is that we begin to deny ourselves and take up our cross daily and follow Jesus and we begin to love those things that God loves.

And that is exactly what happened here in **The Acts 5**. The initial reaction was that great fear came not only on those of the Church but great fear also came on those people who were not saved and who were outside the Church. Now how is that a good thing?

Don't we want more people to come to Church? Isn't the goal that more souls enter into the Church? Yes, but in God's Way.

You see there is a great danger today in the modern Church that has captivated the minds and hearts of many Church leaders. And that great danger is the horror of pragmatism.

Pragmatism is the false belief that whatever "works" must be of God. So a pragmatic approach to Church growth for example- would teach

that whatever causes more warm bodies to sit in the pews must be of God- but that is not true.

First of all- we need to understand that we do not grow God's Church. The Church does not belong to either the Pastor or the people. The Church is not the property of the Deacon board or the Board of Trustees. The Christian Church is the sole property of Jesus Christ and He bought and paid for it with His Own Blood and He is the sole Head of the Church and everything that goes on in the Church that belongs to Him is all about Him and it is for His Glory and in that Church- Jesus Christ alone is to have the preeminence.

And Jesus has chosen a method by which He is going to build His Own Church. Please turn with me to **Matthew 16:18** and see what Jesus Himself said about this:

... I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

So the Church that belongs to Jesus is going to be built by Jesus and the church that belongs to Man is going to be built by Man. Everything that is said or done in the Church that Jesus builds- will be to His Glory; to lift Him up and to His betterment and everything done or said in the church that belongs to Man- will be for Man's glory and to lift Man up and for Man's betterment.

And we have to know that while the gates of Hades itself shall never prevail against the Church that Jesus builds- those gates will absolutely prevail against those religious groups that Man builds.

The Church that Jesus builds will be built in the prescribed way that Jesus said and that is by and through the body of teaching that comprises the already existing Gospel being taught and preached out of the mouth of men who actually live what they teach; and it shall be preached to every creature without fear or compromise as to what the consequences of preaching that Gospel might be to them personally; and those who preach that Gospel will not be ashamed of it to the point that they try to alter or change it.

But religious organizations that Man builds will be brought forth by using slick advertising campaigns; Madison Avenue marketing techniques; clever slogans and cute phrases and every trick in the book that Man can think of to draw a crowd.

The Church that Jesus builds will consist of born again; Spirit filled; Blood bought; sold out; sin hating; cross carrying; self- denying; devil shunning people who love God and who love each other and who hunger and thirst after Righteousness and who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

Religious groups that Man builds will consist of self- centered; sin loving; pleasure mad; money loving; lukewarm; griping and complaining tares- who do what is right in their own eyes.

And my question is why in the world, if given the choice, would truly born again believers ever want to have a building full of man-made tares when we can have people that God has saved in a Church that Jesus has built?

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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