

Behold What Manner of Love

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

Chapter 28- The Sin Unto Death 259 The Sin Unto Death- Part 2

WAOY Thursday 10/09/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing to go over our verse by verse study of the Epistle of **1 John**, and today we are going to continue our new section of study about the sin that is unto death- so let's read **1John 5:16&17** together:

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

Now last time we were looking closely at verse 16 so I want to read that verse again together today:

If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

Now on the last broadcast- we were seeing how that John is teaching here that when we see a brother sin and sin- we should pray for that brother that God will forgive him. Now the qualifier here is that the sin must be the sin that is "not unto death". And, of course, that makes us ask, *"What is the sin that is unto death?"*

Now it is obvious that John understood very clearly what he meant by this phrase, and it is also clear that John thought that everybody already knew the answer to that question when he wrote this because John really doesn't explain himself here, and that leaves us in a bit of a lurch.

If John were alive today- we could just go up to him and ask him what he meant by this phrase. But John is dead and all the other

writers of the Bible are dead, too, and so we are left with only three options here:

1. We can just leave this verse alone and not worry about it and hope that we don't violate it
2. We can make up whatever we think John meant using our own human logic and human reasoning
3. We can take the time to systematically research possible answers so that what we come up with will not be in conflict with anything else that is taught in Scripture

Unfortunately, we live in a day when option 1 is the most prevalent choice with option 2 being a close second. But, neither ignoring this phrase, nor making up our own definition solves the problem, and so we are left with option three. We need to value what is in the Bible enough to take as much time as necessary to find out the answer to this problem so that we may make sure that we do not violate it.

We need to remember, dear friends, that John tells us here in verse 16 that the definition of what the sin unto death is- determines our prayers- so in order to be obedient to what the Apostle demands from us- we must find out what he is talking about here.

This passage has puzzled me for many years. I have spent much time studying and praying about this passage and just what John was talking about. I have gone back to read everything I can find about what the fathers of the Church taught about this phrase, and I have come up with two possible answers that do not violate any other Biblical Truth- to my knowledge.

Now I want to be clear about this- what I am teaching here is my honest best effort at finding a solution that does not contradict any other Biblical Truth- but I must stress to you that while this is my honest best effort- I may be wrong about this. You see, dear friends, I fear God- and the last thing that I want to do is lead *anyone* astray. I take my position in the Church very seriously, and I would rather cut both my legs off and bleed to death rather than teach you something that is not true.

I am accountable to God for what I teach, and I am held to the authority of Scripture for everything that I say. Many things that I say

are very controversial, and I hate that because I am not trying to be controversial at all. I hate the fact that clear Biblical teaching is so rare today that when you hear someone teaching verse by verse- it almost sounds weird. I hate that because it shows how far we all have fallen, and it shows how poorly we have all been taught. I do not believe and I have never said that I am right and anyone who disagrees with me is wrong. I don't believe that and I pray that I don't come across like that.

But I do believe that God is right, and I do believe that God didn't write what He wrote simply because He had room left on the page- but that He meant something very specific and important by everything that He wrote. And I do believe that every single Word in the Holy Bible is inspired, and inerrant, and infallible, and was literally exhaled by the very Mouth of Almighty God, and by default that makes every single Word in this Book- special and unique and worthy of the time it takes us to study it, and worthy of whatever effort it takes for us to obey it and to be found faithful.

There may be many different ways that we can *apply* the Truth of Holy Scripture to our lives- many ways in which we personally apply what God said to ourselves- but while that is true, it is also true that there is only one correct and true *interpretation* of every single verse in the Bible. And what I mean by that is that God meant something very specific by what He said in every single verse, and it really doesn't matter what a particular verse means to us- it only matters what that verse means to God. I do not seek to alter the Word of God to suite what appeals to me- rather I seek to be altered by the Divine Truth of Scripture.

And I do believe that words mean specific things and that it is absolutely impossible to obey something that we don't understand. Biblical concepts are not something that we can willy-nilly twist to make out of it whatever we want to- but we have to study and change and believe and adapt to whatever the Bible teaches- not try to change the Bible to fit what we believe.

And I also believe that Christianity is not new- it is 2,000 years old; the Gospel has already been defined and Christianity has already been established on the earth, and we do not need and we should not try to reinvent the wheel here- but we should obey what Jude taught in **Jude 3** and earnestly contend for the very same faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints.

Many people spend their time trying to repackage the Gospel so that it is more appealing to the lost world- but I see that as tragic mistake. The Gospel doesn't need to be repackaged, beloved- it doesn't need to be improved or updated. The Gospel doesn't need to be reinvented, or made to be more relevant to 21st Century America. The Gospel doesn't need anything added to it or taken away from it. Those are all actions that are carried out by people who are ashamed of the Gospel.

The Gospel is just fine the way it is, and it needs to be learned as it is taught in Scripture, and it needs to be studied from Scripture- not a best seller, and it needs to be loved by hearts that are ablaze with passion for souls to be saved, and it needs to be obeyed by humble bondslaves, and it needs to be defended by grateful souls who love the Truth, and it needs to be preached to every creature by faithful men who actually live what they preach.

And we need to remember, dear friends, that the Gospel needs to be preached- not marketed; it needs to be preached- not presented; it needs to be preached- not administered. People don't need to be "churched", dear friends- they need to be saved, born again, and miraculously and supernaturally regenerated by a Sovereign God.

And the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ has already been set forth and defined and articulated, and the body of teaching that makes up what the Gospel is and what it is not is found in Scripture, and we must be sure that what we are preaching and what we are teaching and what we believe and what we love and what we confess is *that* Gospel and not "another gospel".

So what we understand a verse to say must not contradict with what any other verse says or else our understanding of that verse is wrong- plain and simple. God doesn't speak out of both sides of His Mouth, God isn't glib of tongue, He doesn't stutter, and He doesn't contradict Himself - He says what He means, and He means what He says.

And our job is not to try to force the easiest interpretation onto what God has said- but our job is like a skilled craftsman to study to show ourselves approved of God so that we may not be condemned so that we may rightly divide the Word of Truth.

And, I said all that to say this- there are- in my opinion- two possible answers to just what John meant when he used the term "sin unto death" that doesn't contradict any other verse:

- A. John may 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**.

So since either interpretation would solve the problem for us- let's look at both of them- one at a time.

Please turn in your Bibles and read **Matthew 12:31&32**:

31 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men.

32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

Jesus said that a person can blaspheme Him and still be forgiven- but if anyone blasphemes the Holy Ghost- they cannot ever be forgiven in this life or the next. Now that means, by default, dear friends, that those who blaspheme the Holy Ghost go to hell, and since Salvation is a Sovereign Work of God and is eternal- then that also means by default that no truly saved person can blaspheme against the Holy Ghost- because no saved person can go to hell.

You see, dear friends, the word Salvation does not just have to do with those people who initially repent of their sins- but Salvation also encompasses those people who are kept by the Power of God- all the way to Glory. So the Bible teaches a very interesting process:

God Sovereignly chooses or predestinates people for Salvation from before the foundation of the world. And this choosing has absolutely nothing to do with how bad or sinful or educated or rich or

cultured or connected they are and it is not based on any inherent goodness that God saw in them.

This election or choosing is by Grace alone- meaning it is by the Mercy of God alone and not based on any good that we have in us or any good that we have done. Then, as those elected people are born- God the Holy Spirit goes out into the earth to draw them to Jesus. And the Promise of God is that 100% of those who are chosen are drawn. Now this drawing is not passive and many times, it is not even gentle. It is not a "wooing" as many of us were taught- but this drawing is effectual- it is sure and certain, and is the very same drawing as when fishermen draw fish out of the water in their nets- it is against the will of the fish.

So those who are drawn- come and those who come- Jesus receives, and those whom Jesus receives- Jesus keeps all the way to Glory- so again the Promise of God is that 100% of those whom God chose from before the foundation of the world to be saved- will be saved- and 100% of those who are saved by Jesus will be kept all the way to Heaven!

So these people cannot and will not commit this unpardonable sin- they are sealed and they are kept from this sin by the Sovereign Hand of God. Those who blaspheme the Holy Ghost will not be forgiven and that is why John didn't command that we pray for 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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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.