

So That You May Know

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

Chapter 29- The Sin Unto Death

261 The Sin Unto Death- Part 1

WAOY Wednesday 10/08/08

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 begin a fascinating new section of our study as we look at what John taught about "the sin that is unto death"- so let's read **1John 5:16&17** 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 these are probably two of the most interesting verses in the entire New Testament and much discussion about just what John is talking about here has gone on ever since the second century.

Now at first glance- it looks like John has abruptly changed subjects from verses 14 &15 to what he wrote in verses 16&17- but on closer examination- we are able to see the connection between 16 &17 and 14&15. You see, by giving us one very important exception- the Apostle shows us- in a contrasting way- just what the extent of God's Promise to believers to answer their prayers really is. And I want to explore that connection very carefully over the next several broadcasts with you- so let's read verse 16 again:

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.

Now here- John is telling us that when we see a brother sin a sin

which is “not leading to death”- we should “ask” or pray for that brother that God will “give that brother life”- or in other words- that God will forgive him.

Now first of all- we need to remember that on several occasions- John talks about a people in two different ways. Sometimes John is talking about a person who has really been born again and is legitimately a child of God. But on other occasions- John is referencing people who only *think* they are saved- but who in reality are not saved.

For example- turn in your Bibles and read with me **1John 2:4:**

The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;

Now John is not saying that *some* saved people keep God’s commandments while others- who are equally saved- do *not* keep God’s Commandments. No, John is saying that there are some people in the Church who say they are saved- but they really are not saved and so these people do not keep God’s Commandments. And John says that these unsaved people- who are deceived into thinking they are saved- are liars and the Divine Truth about what it means to be saved is not in them.

And the irrefutable proof that these people are not saved and are, in fact, deceived- is the fact that these lost deceived people do not follow after God’s Commandments- but are still dominated by sin- proving that they have not been born from above.

So even though these people are *physically* in the Church and even though they *say* they are saved- they are in fact yet in their sins because saved people have both the desire and the power to love and serve God and those who are lost do not. So those who are saved- while certainly not sinless- follow after God’s Commandments while those who are lost continue to follow after their own carnal lusts.

So let me repeat. John is *not* teaching here that *some* saved people follow after God’s Commandments while others- who are equally saved- do not obey God’s Commandments. That is *not* what John is teaching here. John is simply teaching that there are some people who are genuinely Blood bought and there are others who have gone through the motions- but who are still lost. And one of the dividing

characteristics between those who are saved and those who only *say* they are saved is in their obedience to God's Commandments.

So John teaches that there are three main aspects that are true with every born again believer and which are not true with those who are lost and the first aspect is that saved people "keep" or follow after God's Commandments.

Now look at **1John 2:9**:

The one who says he is in the Light and *yet* hates his brother is in the darkness until now.

Here John gives us the *second* aspect of what it means to be truly saved. Genuinely saved people love the brethren while lost people love themselves. So John teaches here that saved people or people who are in the Light- love the brethren- while those who are lost but who *say* they are saved or who *say* they walk in the light- hate the brethren. And John teaches here that the fact that these people do not love the brethren proves that they are not truly saved.

In other words, dear friends, John is saying here that talk is cheap. Anybody can pray a prayer. Anybody can walk down an aisle. Anybody can raise their hands or believe some information about God. Anybody get wet in the baptismal waters. But truly born again people have had their nature changed from being after Adam to being after God and so by nature- saved people love- because God loves.

Those who love the brethren prove they are saved while those who do not love the brethren prove that they are deceived and walk in darkness- regardless of what they say.

And you may remember when I went over this earlier in our study of **1John**- that the word, "hate" as used here in this verse- does not mean that fierce kind of anger that we think of today. No, the word, "hate" simply means that you don't care.

So lost people don't care about their brothers and sisters- they will do many things – but they will rarely do anything that *inconveniences* themselves- while saved people care enough to encourage their brothers and sisters and check up on them and exhort them and rebuke them. And when saved people see their brother sin- they go after them to bring them back- because they love like God loves.

Now you can belong to the Yacht Club or the Elks Lodge or some other social club and never even know the names of the people who are members in that club with you. But know this- that there is no such thing as people going to Church with other people and not knowing those people and not caring about their welfare and not participating in their spiritual development and not praying for them on an ongoing basis and not encouraging them on a daily basis. That kind of stuff doesn't happen in a real Church and if it is happening in your Church- dear friends- then know that you really don't have a Church- you have a social club.

Loving the brethren; and caring for them; and praying for them; and actively participating in their spiritual development; and encouraging them on a daily basis- those things are not optional in the Church of the First Born. Those things are going on or you need to shut everything down and repent and start doing your first works over again. The Christian Church has these attributes in them and those organizations that do not- are not true Churches.

Saved, born again, regenerated souls love the brethren; they care about them; they pray for them and weep with them and rejoice with them and John says that this love for the brethren is the second attribute of what it means to be saved.

So is it true that loving God, or keeping God's Commandments, and loving each other fulfills our Christian duty? No, because John teaches that there is a *third* attribute of what it means to be a true Christian- and that third attribute is a right view of Who Jesus is. Please look at **1John 2:21-23**:

21 I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.

23 Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.

For anyone to deny Who Jesus is in either His full Deity or His full Humanity is to deny the Christian Faith and there is no wiggle room on this beloved at all. There is no such thing as being in right standing with God the Father and at the same time holding unbiblical

or wrong views about Jesus. You simply can't get there from here. Let me say it another way- what you believe to be true about Jesus determines whether or not you are saved- and this is true even if you have the other two aspects down pat.

Believing rightly about Jesus- you see is a gift from God to those who are saved. Flesh and Blood does not reveal Who Jesus is to the human mind and heart- no, having a correct confession about Jesus is a gift from God to unworthy sinners. All saved people know Jesus personally and correctly while no lost person does.

Now this third aspect of what it means to be truly saved has taken a hit lately. Because many other religious groups agree with Biblical Christianity about some of the social issues of our day- we are then tempted to call these people, "brothers". But unless and until their confession about Jesus is fully in line with the Bible- they are not our brothers and sisters and they are not our brethren because they are not saved.

Paul taught in **Romans 10:9** that no man can be saved unless and until he confesses with his mouth that Jesus is Lord. And what Paul meant by that is that we must confess that Jesus is God wrapped in human flesh and that Jesus is fully Deity. And we have to remember, dear friends, that Salvation is all God's idea in the first place and we don't have the right to change what it means to get saved or what it means to be saved. Those who confess or who believe in another "Jesus" that Scripture does not describe are not and cannot be saved.

Now that doesn't mean that Christ's Divinity should not cause us to wonder- it should. Everything about Jesus is a mystery and a miracle. In fact the Church had to invent a word to describe the moment when God Almighty took on human flesh and became a Man- because it had never happened before. That word was "incarnate". So when we talk about Jesus- we must understand that Christ is the central Figure of the Christian Faith- everything in the Church is about Jesus- so we need to get this right.

Jesus is the single and sole Mouthpiece of God's Voice in the earth today; He is the Instrument by which God created the worlds; Jesus is the exact image of the invisible God; He is the very radiance of God's Glory; He is higher than the angels; He is the superior Sacrifice that brings forth the superior New Covenant; Jesus is greater than Abraham, Moses, Joshua, David, or Isaiah; He is more important than

Solomon's Temple. All that the Law and Prophets said was about Him; Everything under the first Covenant pointed to Him; We are saved in His Name; washed in His Blood; having His Righteousness imputed to us; Every song that is sung; every sermon that is preached; every word that is spoken in the Church should be to His Glory and to His Honor because in the Church- Jesus is to have the preeminence.

Jesus was and is the most unique Person Who ever lived. That is what John meant when he used the term, "only begotten Son" five different times in his Books. The phrase, "only begotten Son" actually means in the Greek, "God's One and Only Son"- showing us the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

The third century preacher, John Chrysostom said this about Jesus:

"Christ was fully God and fully Man in the same body at the same time without conflict or contradiction"

Nobody was like Jesus before He was born of a virgin and nobody will ever be like Jesus. And without this third aspect of Christianity being fully settled in our minds and hearts – we don't go to Heaven-period.

So John is teaching us here that because all three aspects of what it means to be saved is present in our lives- God now answers our prayers and when we see another saved person sin- we should pray for that brother that God will forgive him.

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.

© 2007- 2023 by Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America
Enjoying God Ministries, Inc. PO Box 147 Saucier, Mississippi 39574 www.covenantofpeace.net

Scripture quotations, except those noted otherwise, are from The New American Standard Bible © 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

This is a single transcript in a larger series of teachings taken from a verse by verse Journey through the Epistle of 1John. You are free to reproduce it and distribute it as the Lord leads you- without cost or reimbursement to us with the stipulation that you may not add anything or take anything away from this transcript without the express written permission of The Covenant of Peace Church and that this complete copyright statement be at the end of all copies.

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.