

Hebrews

Hebrews 10:26-31 – Go On Sinning Willfully

July 5, 2009

I. Preparation for this study of **Hebrews 10:26-31**

- A. This portion of Hebrews is a perplexity to many, and it is ignored by just as many. Sadly, it is a source of division in the body of Christ – not only between theological camps and denominations, but also between individual Christians who would otherwise maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. It is a source of spiritual pride in those who think their explanation is the only God-approved explanation. And sadly, it has been used as a source of suspicion and condemnation toward all who hold a different understanding.
- B. And to me, what is equally sad is that many Christians will spend little time considering and praying about how to apply the practical truths in the **Sermon On The Mount** – yet they'll spend hours passionately debating the meaning and theological impact of this portion of Hebrews.
- C. My purpose today is to offer you an explanation of these verses that makes sense given their context in this chapter and in the book of Hebrews as a whole.
 - 1. I dare not say that my explanation is the only God-approved one, for when compared to those who are knowledgeable about such things, and those who are educated in such things, and those who have devoted themselves to studying such things, and those who have gone before me in dealing with this portion of Hebrews, I am at the bottom of the ladder looking up.
 - 2. I also want to say at the beginning of today's teaching that I do not know of anyone among us – **currently** – who is on the precipice of falling away from their faith in God. I do believe there are a few among us who are unstable in their faith – going up and down like a barometer – but that does not mean they are choosing to return to a life of unbelief and sin – and as such are in jeopardy of falling away from the faith.
 - 3. However, I know several folks who were part of Redford Church in the past, who testified to being born again and over a period of time evidenced growth in their walk with God – yet they not only left our church, they walked away from faith in God and from living the Christian life. In fact, they have returned to a life of unbelief, self-rule, selfishness, and sin. And unless they come to

their senses and repent while still alive, they will die in their of willful rebellion against God – and as such will be counted as those who have fallen away from the faith.

4. My point here is that I am not preaching this at you today as if this is your condition. What I want to do today is warn us against this possibility – a possibility which we ought to be concerned about because it has been realized in the past and can be realized again.

D. Prayer

II. **The Context of Hebrews 10:16-31 is Hebrews 10:19-25**

- A. **Because** we are convinced we can come into the presence of God and live – because of Jesus' shed blood on our behalf . . .
- B. And **because** Christ – our great High Priest – is always present to represent us before God if and when we need it . . .
- C. **Let us draw near** to God with a humble attitude, a pure heart, and a clean life. Let us never let thoughts of God get too far from us – recalling Him to mind whenever possible. And let us talk with God often – just as we would a best friend.
- D. **Let us hold fast** what we publicly claim to believe. In other words, if we claim to be a born again Christian, let us hold on to those ways of thinking, feeling, speaking, and behaving that affirm our claim.
- E. **Let us consider** how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds – making the most of our times together, and increasingly so as the return of Christ draws near.

III. **Hebrews 10:26-31** . . . For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, [27] but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. [28] Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. [29] How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? [30] For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." [31] It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

- A. This statement here in Hebrews 10 is just one of the eight warnings in Hebrews about falling away from the faith and returning to a life of unbelief and sin. *The rest of this chapter completes this thought.*

B. **Hebrews 10:26** . . . For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

1. **For if we go on sinning willfully**

- a. This is knowing the right thing to do, yet willfully choosing to rebel against God and involve ourselves in doing what is wrong – not just once or several times, but as a pattern of life – which is an indication we have fallen away from the faith.
- b. **James 4:17** . . . Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, to him it is sin. (*Willful sinning*)
- c. **I John 3:7-10** . . . Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; [8] the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. [9] No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. [10] By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

2. **after receiving the knowledge of the truth**

- a. This phrase refers to those who have been born again.
- b. The Four Soils – in only one soil does the seed not come to life, yet in only one does it result in bearing fruit or coming to its intended end.
- c. **Luke 8:11-15** . . . "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God. [12] "Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved. [13] "Those on the **rocky soil** are those who, when they hear, **receive** the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. [14] "The seed which fell **among the thorns**, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity. [15] "But the seed in the **good soil**, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.
- d. **II Peter 2:20-22** . . . For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and

Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. [21] For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them. [22] It has happened to them according to the true proverb, "A dog returns to its own vomit," and, "A sow, after washing, returns to wallowing in the mire."

3. **there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins**

- a. This does not mean that we cannot repent of our rebellious condition and return to faith in God through Jesus Christ.
 - (1) But it does mean that if we choose to turn away from faith in Christ and reconciliation to God and return to a life of unbelief and sin, there is no second or third option of salvation for us.
 - (2) And it also means that if a Christian turns from his faith in God and obedience to God to live a life contrary to Christian faith and obedience, and dies in that condition, he will die outside God's saving grace. **For example**, the one who commits adultery and then repents can be restored. The one who remains in adultery cannot – even if he makes a public show of repentance and seeking forgiveness.
- b. **Ezekiel 18:21-28** . . . But if the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die. [22] All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live. [23] Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and live? [24] But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and does according to all the abominations that a wicked man does, will he live? All his righteous deeds which he has done will not be remembered for his treachery which he has committed and his sin which he has committed; for them he will die. [25] Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' Hear now, O house of Israel! Is My way not right? Is it not your ways that are not right? [26]

When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and dies because of it, for his iniquity which he has committed he will die. [27] Again, when a wicked man turns away from his wickedness which he has committed and practices justice and righteousness, he will save his life. [28] Because he considered and turned away from all his transgressions which he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.

- C. **Hebrews 10:27** . . . but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.
 - 1. but a terrifying expectation of judgment – we not only know the judge, we know the expected outcome of the judgment and the punishment. Such knowledge should strike terror in us today, but if not today, then you can be sure it will strike terror in us one day.
 - 2. and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.
- D. **Hebrews 10:28** . . . Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.
- E. **Hebrews 10:29** . . . How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?
 - 1. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve – who shows disdain for Christ, his blood, and his grace; who despises God and His word; who chooses self-rule in defiance of God’s rule; who commits spiritual adultery; who makes himself an enemy of God.
 - a. We are so prone to white-wash our sin, to think of it and even speak of it as if it weren’t all that bad. And we even expect others to easily overlook or quickly forgive and forget the sins we have committed.
 - b. David said his sin was ever before him (**Psa. 51:3**). Paul called himself the chief of sinners (**I Tim. 1:15**), and said he was the least of the apostles because he persecuted the church (**I Cor. 15:9**). What is my point? These two men remembered and felt the horror of their sin well after it had been committed – which indicates they did not take sin lightly or try to white-wash their sin or expect others to overlook it even though it was in

the past, and they were washed by the blood, and forgiven by God.

2. Three pictures of despising God, Christ, the HS, and salvation
 - a. who has trampled under foot the Son of God
 - b. and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified
 - c. and has insulted the Spirit of grace
- F. **Hebrews 10:30** . . . For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people."
 1. For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay."
 2. And again, "The Lord will judge His people."
- G. **Hebrews 10:31** . . . It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
 1. **Matthew 21:43-44** . . . Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it. [44] And he who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; but on whomever it falls, it will scatter him like dust."
 2. **Matthew 10:28** . . . Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

IV. Conclusion

- A. Dwell in the presence of God with confidence, with humility of heart, and with purity of life. Hold fast to your commitment to be a Christian. Work as a group to motivate and encourage one another to love and good deeds so that no one falls away and, like the pig to the mud or the dog to its vomit returns to a life of unbelief and sin.